1989

Oberlin Local Legend

Laura Naomi Albert
Oberlin College

OBERLIN LOCAL LEGEND

Submitted to

Mr. Jack Glazier

Advisor, Anthropology Department

Oberlin College

By

Laura Naomi Albert

January 6, 1989

Acknowledgements

This essay incurs indebtedness to more people than I can acknowledge briefly. I am indebted to a number of townspeople for their help, time and confidence in me. I am especially grateful to Bill Long for his generous and knowledgeable help in the numerous interviews I had with him, for allowing me to use his unpublished work, for his insights into the town, and for his Tour of Oberlin that will appear in the film accompanying this thesis. I would also like to thank George Jones for sharing his memories about Oberlin and helping to demystify the past. I much appreciate his patient indulgence of my many questions, and him and his students for allowing me to film two of his fascinating nature walks at Chance Creek and Big Flats. I am also grateful to my informants Agnes Davison, Allen Patterson, Edie Howth, Margaret Baker, many shop keepers who have helped me gather data, and to my Oberlin College student informants.

I must thank the Committee of the Jerome Davis Research Awards who generously supplied the means to make the ethnographic film which accompanies this thesis.

Special thanks to my friends who put up with me and had confidence that I might finish, and, as always, to my parents.

There is simply no way adequately to thank my advisor Jack Glazier for his unending encouragement, insight, patience, editing and reediting. Not only did he give me such anthropological sensibility as I may have, but also he has helped me incredibly to gain the confidence I needed to use this priceless gift.

CONTENTS PAGE

Abstract

This thesis concerns Oberlin local legend, its forms and functions. It focuses on one of the vital legends in Oberlin, the local/historic legend of the Oberlin Wellington Rescue, about the town's efforts to send a recaptured slave to freedom. The event occurred in 1858, twenty-five years after Oberlin's founding. This incident was instrumental in "putting Oberlin on the map," it helped to precipitate the abolition of the Fugitive Slave Act. The legend has been associated with the better known story of the John Brown Rebellion, a contemporary historical tale that also has Oberlin origin.

The Oberlin-Wellington Rescue has been popular for over one hundred years, and its telling has become an Oberlin tradition; it is a part of the seventh graders' local history curriculum, and often Bill Long, the town expert on the legend and my prime informant, is invited to retell the story for the middle school children. It is also recalled during Oberlin's Heritage Days Celebration during the summer. Long has used the legend to help Oberlinians come to terms with the events of the McCarthy era and to help them understand their relation to Martin Luther King's dream.

The Rescue legend has assumed many forms that some would not classify as legend. Bill Long has written two plays on the Rescue, one of which has been acted out repeatedly in Oberlin. He is looking for a larger, outside audience for

the presentation of his more imaginative second version. So far he has been unsuccessful. In the process of looking for an audience, Long contacted a novelist, Nat Brant. Brant took an interest in the story, but not in Long's play, and is now writing his own monograph on the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue. In the monograph the Rescue story leaves the realm of legend and will probably become a combination of national folktale and history in its reception into the mass culture.

This thesis is in part an acceptance of Alan Dundes' invitation to future folklorists and anthropologists to begin to interpret legend material as a product of human fantasy. Dundes tells us, "one does not escape the real world into legend; rather legend represents fantasy in the real world." (Dundes 1975:165) If legend material is only collected and shelved, the anthropologist can never hope to gain insight into the culture he studies from this richly symbolic and metaphorical narrative style.

A functionalist approach to legend is fruitful because it compels the anthropological folklorist to examine the way this element of culture is intertwined with the society from which it was culled. Legend has been too frequently collected piecemeal, classified, and stored for future generations to decipher. This thesis concentrates on the interpretive aspects of legend. In one of the chapters, a textual analysis of the Legend as it appears in Fletcher's A History of Oberlin College Volumes I and II appears.

Fletcher was an Oberlin graduate. Another chapter contains a contextual analysis of the legend, an exploration of the function the legend has for the tellers and listeners in this radical, iconoclastic town. The functional bent in the thesis is complemented by an interest in symbolic anthropology, and relies heavily on Victor Turner's interpretive style of the function of symbol in performance, and Dan Sperber's insights into the nature of symbol.

Introduction

As soon as I had decided to collect Oberlin local legends, I went to an old Oberlin store, Camcote House, that specializes in a few antiques, and many replicas of antiques, and told Mr. Campbell, the chatty old store owner, that I needed one of his clay "story telling" pipes. I had walked into an inspirational place. Camcote house is a store of illusions, there are new objects that look old, and real antiquities: big old fifteenth century prayer books with metal buckles and hinges, and wooden end covers protecting parchment paper stained with red berry and black ash letters and notes, and richly colored stained glass windows. Even Mr. Campbell, a native Oberlinian, is an unusual item. He often wears his kilt to his shop, looking like a proud Scottish soldier. Sometimes he is accompanied by his quite charming wife, who speaks with a British accent, and caters tea parties. His wife seems to be a survival of the best traditions in England, yet she, too, is a native Oberlinian, her accent is affectation.

I was first attracted to Camcote house because a friend told me that they played classical music in the store and had some of the nicest items in Oberlin. The husband and wife, upon hearing you come in, receive you, ask how you are, and leave you alone to browse, touch, and explore. This is a marked difference from say Deans' family store, or the Coop

Bookstore where bags must be checked, and mirrors greet you around every corner and niche.

After our usual greeting and punch in the arm, and after learning how he could help me, Mr. Campbell, fully kilted, set me up with a twelve inch red clay "storytelling" pipe with an especially thin, curved, stem. He packed it with some of his own tobacco, and gave me a light. As I began puffing away, I discovered that the pipe worked like a charm; he went into one of his usual easy narratives about the history of the item I had just purchased. He told me that there was a place in each pub for a man's clay pipe, that they were often identifiable by size. The long stem would break periodically, but then this was like having a new mouthpiece. I asked him whether women ever smoked pipes. Sure, he said, his wife had a beautiful one that she would smoke at home. I knew then that a long clay pipe in Oberlin public was not the most feminine statement, but, as Mr. Campbell suggested, this is Oberlin, and no one cares what you do in Oberlin.

I smoked the pipe in the store until I felt comfortable. Then I took my pipe outside of the shop, leaving Camcote's incense and classical music. I felt dizzy from the tobacco, and embarrassed to have a long pipe in my hands. A friend brushed by me, and broke the stem of my dramatic pipe from twelve inches into a stub of one inch.

As Oberlin's Camcote House is a kind of halfway house

between fantasy and reality; antique and antiqued; historic and contrived, so is Oberlin local legend a combination of these qualities. While the Camcote owners take liberties with their identity, and create the atmosphere that they live in, so do the givers of legend in Oberlin. Legend is a kind of fantasy that is taken as reality. It validates itself, as Camcote House does, through the illusion of history. Despite it s fantastic qualities, this store functions perfectly well, the business is lucrative, and it has a temporary effect on the people who wander in, and a more lasting effect on people who bring some of their items into their homes. Legend functions in a similar capacity. It maintains itself by being retold, and like an antiquity, it can be handed down from generation to generation. The function of a legend may change, like the function of an antiquity. Its original functions may have changed through the years until it has an entirely new function.

I have spent fifteen months collecting legend in Oberlin. In this thesis I have taken a multitude of legends home to examine, and interpret. Some will be analyzed while others will remain on display to be used by other Oberlin students. Other items of legend that follow the Camcote suit may be examined in their larger Oberlin context.

Like the unusual atmosphere in the Campbell's store, my informants presented their legends in a unique fashion. Bill Long, my prime informant usually met me in Campus Restaurant

or Quick and Delicious. His friends and associates would walk by and he would momentarily abandon the interview to chat. Long was very much in charge of the interviews, choosing were we met, how long we would talk, and when he would leave. He often appeared busy, but would sit with me for hours. After our first interview he gave me a tour of Oberlin in his car. On this tour he showed me the regions of Oberlin that captivated his interest: the Coop Bookstore, the various houses, churches and housing projects in Oberlin, the Oberlin industrial area, and the cemetery. Long's tour emphasized the parts he had played in building the town.

George Jones, an emeritus botany professor, had a very different style. He relayed many legends on his Sunday afternoon nature walks. About six adults and one or two students meet at the Greenhouse at 2:00 every Sunday. Dr. Jones leads this party into the Oberlin backwoods. I accompanied him on two such walks, to Chance Creek and Big Flats. Though he is ninety-one years old, he maintains a quick pace on these hikes. He climbs up steep hills, scrambles over fallen trees, and swings down branches to get into ravines. Every few yards he stops to pick a plant and quizzes the group on its nature. He tells stories about some of the plants he collects. For instance his father used cottonwood trees to build a mock Peter Pindar Pease (the first Oberlin pioneer) cabin for the Oberlin Centennial. On his nature walks Jones always wears a green ranger's suit, a

brimmed hat that protects him from the sun, and a collecting basket that hangs over his arm.

Among my other informants are Agnes Davison, a retired utilities clerk; a number of people from Tressie's nursing home and the Senior Citizen high-rise; and various Oberlin College students.

An ethnographic film supplements this thesis on Oberlin Local legend. This film focuses on the aspects of legend that cannot be adequately addressed in a thesis: the performance aspects. Environmental context, gesture, audience participation, the narrator's tone and style; all of these are aspects of legend that elude the written word. Disregarding the variations that occur among these non-verbal components of legend inhibits the accurate depiction of legendary meaning. Yet placing one's informants within a visual context is still new to anthropology. Cost, inconvenience and technical inadequacy are among the prohibitive factors to engaging in video anthropology. Yet the value of the technology seems to outweigh the cost. Perhaps as more anthropologists insist that visual representation supplement their ethnography, funding will become more available for this resource, and technical proficiency in video will become part of every methods course.

What's in a Legend?

Before any meaningful analysis of Oberlin local legend can be suggested, we must discuss the nature of legend. Anyone who has glanced through the folklore literature has found that the definition of folklore, not to mention legend, is as varied and subjective as is discourse on the definition of art. Folklore scholars such as Alan Dundes, Elliott Oring and William Bascom, have realized the problems inherent in defining their fields of study, and have usually resorted to a "working definition,"-- one that allows them to move freely in the field. Alan Dundes employs a definition that lists examples of legend, so that his readers will understand the "gist" of what he studies, but it is often difficult to extrapolate any kind of principle from his presentation. Oring chooses to list different definitions and attempts no solution. Bascom suggests many traditional definitions, but often these are too constricting.

I purposefully choose not to offer a definition of legend in view of current thinking in legend scholarship. In other words, the legend genre is so dependent on context, including place, time, audience, and purpose, that any single definition will be restrictive. As every theory supplies a pattern from which the user may shape his material, so the definition of legend that I have culled from various sources is designed for my purposes.

While legend is usually considered an oral art, an examination of the process of recording the written word may help us to understand the process of narrating the legend. Barbara Goldsmith wrote an illuminating article on the process of writing. She was frustrated by people who assumed that because they had a story to tell, they could write: "The illusion that anyone can write a book is basic narcissism. The fantasy transcends reality." She considers that because good writing seems effortless, the fantasy that anyone can do it has become common. She then ponders the psychological reasons that Freud suggested as to why people maintain this illusion:

> The appeal of fine writing is that it resonates with both the truths and fantasies of those who are unable to write, the only difference between the writer and the non-writer being that the former 'understands how to elaborate his daydreams so that they lose their essentially personal element.'(Goldsmith :)

Goldsmith, in other words, is interested in the way that experience is rendered in artful terms, equally applicable to the production of legend. Linda Degh has analyzed some of the processes that occur before personal encounters become legendary. The first hand personal experience, when told to another person is called a memorate. These memorates are related in the first person. If and when memorates are retold in the third person they begin to become legend and therefore take on a more general significance. Memorates become fabulates, those memorates that are many times removed from the first telling. There are many signifiers that

accompany the process from memorate to fabulate and then to legend. First, as the framework changes from memorate to fabulate, the author of the story may be lost. The story may then vary, because the teller has misquoted it somewhere in his delivery, because of artistic changes in the performance, because of a different context, or because of a changed audience it was advantageous to make alterations (Degh 1974:25-39). It is in this recalling that we may use the Freudian theory-- if a legend is well performed, the teller universalizes the experience. Legend is not a personal story. It must contain the same sort of universal truths and fantasies that are required of good writing. As with good writing the process may be conscious on the part of the teller, or it may be an unconscious accident, but it takes the personal symbol of the memorate and transforms it into a group symbol which turns it into legend.

It is when the story leaves the realm of the individual and becomes the property of the collective group that legend emerges. Most vital to the expression of legend is the performance. As Victor Turner suggests, "a performance is the finale of an experience" (Turner 1982:14). Turner also suggests "an experience is never truly completed until it is 'expressed,' that is, until it is communicated in terms intelligible to others" (Turner 1982:14). While I do not agree that experience depends upon expression, I do believe that this is one criteria of legend. This may be why such

broad definitions of folklore such as "folklore is verbal art" exist.

Legend must be "exploitable commons," that is the property and responsibility of the group, available for its members to change, use and destroy. I reject any Jungian notions of the collective conscious here because legend begins as memorate, personal experience, expressed by one individual to another. As it is reused it becomes legend, because it is donated to the commons of the society where its is transformed. The personal symbol is replaced by a collective one. The framework of tale has changed-- it is offered to another from an anonymous other. When the previous memorate is transferred into experience, that is expressed, it becomes part of the culture's commons, and may be used by private individuals in any way they see fit. When it is performed a second time, especially if it is altered to fit the new performer's use, it is temporarily a part of the private domain, only to be donated again, in a new form, to the cultural commons. I choose a materialist metaphor here, because a legend may be used in many of the same ways we think of land. It may be overused, for example stories of the Oberlin radical, and then become a cliche; or may be left fallow for long periods of time until it is needed, like the Cassie Chadwick story that was revitalized by the Oberlin Public Library conflict. Legend may also be used in conjunction with other legends to create a new context or

legendary saga: this is the case of the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue which will be discussed in greater detail in the chapters to come. A more famous example of the conjugated legend is the Odyssey, which is a collection of many different pieces combined to depict the life of one historical character.

The materialist metaphor for legend is also useful for understanding why some people resent others "coming in" and making use of their legend resources. This has happened in Oberlin with regard to a novelist coming in to investigate a legend with the goal of writing a monograph on the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue. The land metaphor is also helpful because legend and other forms of folklore are used to define and secure membership in a group. The misuse of metaphor by an outsider can cause confusion and be seen as an invasion (much like an enemy treading on a group's soil) by members of the folk group.

Folklore has been used as a weapon throughout history to create boundaries including and excluding certain groups. Legend has been used by outsiders to manipulate members of a different folkloric group-- for example the English made a conscious effort to revive some of the dying folklore and language of the Irish to keep them "looking back" and prevent modernization of Ireland. A historical examination shows that Oberlin belief systems have also been used against its inhabitants from the beginning of the foundation of the

college by religious groups who did not agree with the Oberlin religio-political mix, causing group exclusion, and group bonding.

For our purposes, legend is a process. It is the process of the transformation of individual cultural experience to another person (memorate), and simultaneously to a common cultural pool. From this pool anyone may exploit the knowledge. In the process of the exploitation of another's experience comes change. It is the changing of the memorate to the fabulate and then to the legend, the depersonalization, and then the universalization that creates the legend. This universalization occurs through repeated performance and group exposure. The memorate quality that is often associated with legend, and that makes it so difficult to distinguish from oral history, is the heart of the legend. Legend always seems to have a personal perspective, and yet it has lost the personal symbol, so it is "haunting." It is the process-oriented, dual-origin of legend that makes it so difficult to categorize. It contains the elements of personal experience and group usage that make it simultaneously removed from us, and yet have personal relevance.

It does not matter whether legend is "true or false," or even whether it is believed to contain veracity. What is important is that its roots are bound in individual memory, and then transformed so that they are adaptable to a group's

cultural commons. Where in writing the author elaborates his daydreams until they lose their "personal element," in legend a personal "daydream" is altered by other members of the society. Legend is by definition a collaborative effort, a constraint that demands group participation. Where the writer must create from his own memorate or imagination and then depersonalize his own symbols, the folk make oral writing a group endeavour.

A Short History

I conducted my field research on local legend in the town of Oberlin, located in Russia township, Lorain county, thirty five miles west of Cleveland. Most of my informants were older people who have lived in Oberlin, well before it assumed its modern shape. Before I asked my informants what legends they could narrate, I requested that they take me on a mental tour of the Oberlin they remembered from the past, and then on a tour of modern day Oberlin.

The college was first swamp land, later cleared for agriculture. The first Oberlin pedestrians trod forested paths impenetrable by carriage. Later dirt roads were replaced by huge cobbled stone paths. Oberlin men and women accompanied each other on the "coeducational walks," constructed for recreation and modesty. Years later Oberlinians paved their streets, and then painted the zebra

striped crosswalks on the severely pot-holed roads that even today destroy our car's transmissions.

> The original Oberlin colony, founded in 1833, grew on a tract in an unbroken forest [on the "Western Reserve"], entirely unappropriated by the early settlers of the county in consequence of its uninviting surface, lying on the belt of clay which traverses Northern Ohio from East to West, destitute of springs and rocks and hills, but with a soil of sufficient strength to sustain a varied forest (Fairchild 1860:7).

Oberlin was isolated: three miles from contact with any other settlements. Indian hunting paths still crossed the forest when the Reverend John J. Shipard of Elyria and P.P. Stewart purchased the land. It was in this swampland that young volunteers in search of a Christian utopia signed the Oberlin Covenant, the original doctrine of the college. Through muddy, often impenetrable forest roads, hundreds of students from the peripheries of the new world, traveled to the center, Oberlin. Because of Oberlin's extreme isolation, many of the legends surrounding the institution concern outsiders penetrating Oberlin boundaries, and accounts of Oberlin excursions into the outer realm where they try to make the world a bit more compatible with their own dogma. Two examples of the dangers Oberlinians encountered when wandering outside the bounds of their Alma Mater represent the extreme notions of center and periphery felt in early Oberlin:

> To show the complete isolation of Oberlin sentiment, it is only necessary to say that there was not the least sympathy felt toward the place by any of the neighboring towns. The little colony was quite alone in the

> advocacy of anti-slavery. The towns in the vicinity were ready at any time to assist the slave holders. Often they held indignation meetings, and discussed measures for putting Oberlin down. Anonymous communications were sent in threatening to burn the town, and for years an armed patrol had to be kept to guard it. Students were egged, stoned, sometimes seriously hurt, for the sole crime of hailing from Oberlin. One eminent evangelist, a man noted for his Christian love, told the writer that the legs of his horse were once cut to the bone, for the simple reason that the animal had the misfortune of belonging to an Oberlinite. Yet these persecutors who were themselves so intolerant were punishing a dumb brute because he chanced to belong to a community which they fancied to be offensive because of intolerance (Shumway and Brower 1883:23).

Such stories served to further bind the Oberlin community. Membership led to persecution, but the persecution caused further cohesiveness, a common struggle.

Oberlinians faced many real threats when they wandered from the town to spread the word:

> Another instance is related of the way in which the early anti-slavery enthusiasts from Lane Seminary were treated. Rev. Amos Dresser, one of the "rebels," now of Franklin, Nebraska, was selling Bibles in the streets of Nashville, Tennessee, when some one inquisitively peeped into his buggy, and found that the books were wrapped up in old copies of the Philanthropist. He was thereupon arrested, tried, sentenced in due form of law, and treated to twenty lashes upon his bare back in the Public Square in Nashville! Does not such an outrage make the blood boil at the mere recital today (Shumway and Brower 1883:23)?

Episodes such as these are seldom experienced by the college students today, yet Oberlinians still enjoy the title of "rebel" and continue to wear the brands that outsiders burn on them as medals of honor.

Today, despite rumors of the Middle School sinking, Oberlin stands on solid earth, though it remains an anomaly

of the environment; geographically awkward because it is the only plot in Russia township that does not fit squarely into the grid system. This lack of geographical congruence with the rest of the community is representational of the social separateness that Oberlin has continually maintained with its neighbors.

The Oberlin Covenant was discontinued shortly after the College was founded, but its remnants can still be seen on the Oberlin Quilt, hanging in Mudd Library, and on the samplers displayed (and on sale) in the Oberlin Inn.

The college's physical appearance has changed dramatically. Except for the mosquitoes there are few physical reminders within the town that Oberlin was built on a swamp. While many of the old houses still stand, the parts of town occupied by the local business men and the college is highly landscaped. The conspicuous areas of town give an air of extreme wealth and careful grooming, though the less visible parts are lined with low income projects.

Instead of Indian hunting trails crossing the Oberlin forest, today State routes ten and fifty eight intersect on Main street, bringing through traffic from much of Ohio. For the most part, however, this traffic is en route to some larger settlement, so the college still maintains much of its original isolation and privacy. Industry has been introduced in Oberlin corporation, but lies on the periphery, so the town maintains a secluded feeling still conducive to

ideological insulation.

While the outside has seldom ventured into the refuge of Oberlin, the town has always had a profound influence in shaping the workings of the periphery. In the early days the Oberlinians fought for temperance and abolition. Hundreds of semi-historical anecdotes about these times exist in the Oberlin Archives, and in the memories of the older population of the town. Oberlin's early causes and battles have affected the neighboring towns such as Wellington, and the effects reached as far as Cleveland, and perhaps altered the history of the entire United States. We will come back to this point in a later chapter.

The early Oberlin missionaries worked in China. Later the war movement (in Oberlin the peace movement) held prime importance for the towns people, pushing the active focus of the tiny college to Washington D.C. and then to Korea and Vietnam. Various memorials and parks remind us of Oberlin's active past, and participatory present. Today Oberlin's influence reaches as far as South Africa.

Oberlin is the refuge for members of the college and town as they leave the community and step into peril, almost always returning to the norm of iconoclasm in Oberlin, as indicated by the oral tradition. Oberlin's legend, along with its historical record, emphasizes matters of morality, and social justice.

The more modern legends, collected from college

students, stray from the traditional seeds of radicalism and unconventional morality, despite the student's current activism. This may reflect recent changes in the Oberlin social structure. The most important social change that has occurred since the founding of Oberlin is the schism of the college from the town. Originally Oberlin college and town were synonymous. Students came to Oberlin from all over the country to persue a religious way of life, and they built their town around these principles.

Today the college is fissioned from the town: there is a rotating community of college students surrounded by a sedentary town community. Ironically the town has absorbed the legends once attributed to the college, while the students remain oblivious for the most part as to the nature of there inheritance.

I will continue to examine the modern town of Oberlin shortly, but in order to properly analyze the legends of Oberlin, one has to be well versed in Oberlin history. Most of the legends that I have collected are historical in nature. It is the use to which the stories are put rather than the veracity of falsehood of the tale that causes me to classify them as legends. I have found no scholarly support for my decision.

Most of my thesis will concentrate on the function of a particular legend in this small town. Therefore my theoretical orientation, analysis and ethnography will be of

a functional/ historic nature. My research has emphasized the historicity of the Oberlin legend: as I have collected testimony mostly from my interviews with the "old timers" of the town, the college archives, Oberlin oral history transcripts, and articles written for the Oberlin Alumnae Magazine.

The advantage to the anthropological/folkloric approach is that it concentrates more on the ritualistic, symbolic and functional aspects of the legend that provide both a textual and contextual framework rather than the extremely contextual tendencies of the historical approach, and the often overly textual approaches that a literary perspective brings to the understanding of local legend. The anthropological perspective provides the means for a deeper understanding of the importance of legend in modern Oberlin society, to the Oberlin individual as he orders his world, and as a comparative device that allows us to see Oberlin as it compares itself to other small towns.

Some of the Legends

Legend can be fantasy considered by teller and listener to be true, as Bascom suggests (1965:4), often a stubby inch piece of history puffed up into a twelve inch tale, for example the numerous stories of houses in Oberlin with secret tunnels and hidden rooms used to hide runaway slaves. One such house, set back from South Professor Street behind the Conservatory parking lot has such a reputation. It once belonged to James Monroe, who was an anti-slavery leader in the 1850s. There is a narrow winding stair that leads up into the cupola that is said to have housed escaped slaves headed for Canada. As Geoffrey Blodgett, an Oberlin historian notes, most of these houses were built after the Civil War, when there was no longer need for such accommodations. Monroe house was built in the fall of 1866, one and one half years after the Civil war ended! Monroe did not own the house until 1870 (Blodgett 1972:4-10). There is, however one house in Oberlin that can claim such fame, and the verity of the secret compartment in this house has led to a belief in a large number of such hidden chambers and to grander stories about tunnels under Tappan Square leading to First Church. Such stories have even made headlines in the Cleveland Plain Dealer (Hosford 1933:232). But legend can also be the genuine historical article, for example the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue, where Oberlinians stood by their belief in a higher law than the law of the land and broke the

Federal Fugitive Slave Act by freeing a recaptured slave from the custody of two U.S. Marshals. In this case the story is based in fact, what makes it legend is the repetition of the story, the framework it is presented in, and the affect it has on the townspeople.

Legend does not have to be a priceless antique handed down from folk father to folk son. It can be a modern tale that deserves equal observation: Oberlin is the home of the Hot Fudge Sundae. This is a source of temporary amazement and pride to the towns people and college freshmen. Oberlin legends can be modern tales that are synthetically "antiqued" or old survivals that are revived for seemingly unknown reasons, replaced in the display cabinet, for contemporary use. One such revitalized legend is about Cassie Chadwick, a particularly tricky young lady who had expensive European tastes. She came from Cleveland into Oberlin claiming to be the illegitimate daughter of Andrew Carnegie. Cassie asked the bank for a considerable loan on false statement of connection and securities. The bank granted her the loan, and she ran out on them. President King met Andrew Carnegie on a business trip, and related the story to him. Carnegie not only refunded the money that was lost, bringing the town out of near bankruptcy, but also donated a public library to the town. This legend lost its popularity until a controversy as to who has responsibility for maintenance of the library caused the old story to resurface. Legends can

be used for political means, thus influencing reality.

On a more mystical level, there are numerous ghost stories that circulate in both Oberlin college and town-- a kind of unliving history, taken by most in jest, and by others more seriously. For example there are numerous stories surrounding Shurtleff Cottage-- some believe it was built over a relocated graveyard. It is said that while the headstones were moved to the new site, the lazy workers never moved the coffins, and the nameless spirits are angry. This story is perpetuated for fun. Another ghost story involves "Stone House," that was built from the same stones as Peters Building, and is taken more seriously. Margaret Baker, the landlady of the house, and her partner Gary both believe that this house is haunted. One scalding hot day, just after she bought the house, Baker was on her knees cleaning. A ghost appeared over the bed. It was an older woman in a long nightgown. She had her hair pulled back, accentuating a very long nose. Margaret Baker ran out of the house. She asked an older member of the community whether he knew anyone who fit the description of this lady. Sure enough it was the former owner who had committed suicide. Baker and Gary have had numerous experiences with this ghost-- lights flashing, doors slamming. They no longer dare to enter the house, but they do rent it to students who, to their surprise, have never complained about suspicious happenings. This memorate describes the intense power that

legends may hold over members of the community. Both Baker and Gary are mildly dysfunctional because of their experience.

Oberlin has a healthy variety of legend types. For example the Cassie Chadwick story is a kind of etiological legend, explaining the origin of current phenomena such as the Carnegie library. The Oberlin-Wellington Rescue is a historical legend, a topic for modern historians to squabble over. Perspectives on this legend seem to change with the times. The Rescue has transformed from a victory for God, to a victory for Oberlin. More recently it has been called a victory for humanity and finally it is told as a victory for blacks.

Other Oberlin legends surround place names. Peter Pindar Pease, a restaurant named after the first pioneer in Oberlin, names all of its sandwiches after famous Oberlin people and places. There are also legends around local rebellions, for example Oberlin's participation in Harper's Ferry, and the John Brown Rebellion. Oberlin claims a legendary connection to the election of President Lincoln and the start of the Civil War. There are legends about natural catastrophes like the flooding of Plum Creek, and numerous belief legends. In the course of this thesis I will analyze the content, style, and structure of select events, and their different tellings.

Legends challenge our sense of "the normal." They make

us examine more closely the "boundaries of the natural, [our] conceptions of fate, destiny and coincidence. Legends are thus difficult to separate from other parts of a conversation because, when skillfully performed, they blend in with the rest of the conversation (Oring 1986:129).

The historical verity or falsehood of a legend seems to matter less than the mood that determines the legendary quality of the story. Some of the legends I have collected were culled from oral histories, and could have remained unnamed if I had not been looking for the framework. Other legends were told expressly for my benefit, while still others were delivered for audiences other than myself, as teaching and dramatic devices.

Often nothing differentiated history from legend, but most of my informants were wary of supplying "stories" that might make them appear "stupid" or "gullible." Informants often referred me to other members of the community because they did not "know that kind of stuff," or felt that legend is "mostly old gossip." Other informants enjoyed "talking Oberlin" and took pride in their titles such as "the Oberlin Historian." While local attitudes revealed confusion in distinguishing between lore and history, they also showed a hostility to the etic term "folklore."

Most of my informants were older adults. Sex and race had little to do with the supply of legends known, but had more to do with presentation and type of legend told. Age,

however corresponded with a much larger repertoire of legend. The young people in Oberlin would supply short, one-line legends for example: "Oberlin is home of the hot fudge sundae," and "Shurtleff is haunted," and "there is a wishing stone on Tappan Square, have you ever tried it?" The compact nature of these legends may be due to the influence of television in our society. Young people tend to package their legends. My older informants related longer tales that were more interconnected with local life in Oberlin. Because the legends were closer to them, they were more difficult to distinguish from oral history.

Except for the more complex, eye-witness accounts of ghost stories, most legends were presented as history, or were qualified with: "I don't believe this is true, but some people do," or they were relayed with an embarrassed smile that I interpreted to mean, "I'll go along with this for a while, though I know what you're thinking." There was a hesitancy among my informants to relate legends, no matter what their degree of education. They made sure that I understand that they did not actually believed "those things." When legends were believed, they were presented as history, and the historical perspective was indicated by attempts to be as precise as possible. Folklore was clearly "gauche." Legend represented a joke, a lie or ignorance. Performing a legend tainted one as "a believer."

Most of my informants suggested that I talk to two

Oberlinians who "know everything about Oberlin." The first is George Jones, an emeritus professor of botany and biology, who is ninety one years old, a second generation Oberlin resident, and an Oberlin graduate. George Jones is living legend: he has experienced it, and created it. He tells most of his legends in memorate form, and uses his stories as teaching devices in his Sunday afternoon nature walks.

Bill Long's name also surfaced repeatedly during my search. Bill Long is a relative newcomer to the Oberlin scene. He arrived in 1948, and brought with him new ideas. He has virtually created Oberlin industry, and has had a profound hand in the modern racial progress of Oberlin. He is best known for his business skills, and his association with the Coop Bookstore that he has run for most of its life. Long often presents his legend in a political context. His face is often seen around town, though he just retired at age sixty-five. Bill Long is not only well versed in Oberlin legend, but he has also begun to recreate it. He has written two plays of Oberlin concern: both on the Wellington Rescue.

The functions of legend are varied in this small town. The aim of this thesis is to understand the functions and symbolic value of legend in a small town as it appears and is transformed over time. I will also consider why certain people choose to revitalize and exploit their knowledge of folklore, and others try to ignore it, or would be pleased to let it lie. The focus will remain, however, on the town, a

sedentary community that works as a body: versus the college, with a student body rotates every four years.

Line By Line: A Textual Approach

In his seminal article "The Functions of Folklore," Bascom suggests that "the aspect of folklore of least concern to literary folklorists but perhaps of greatest concern to anthropological folklorists is function" (Dundes 1965:277). I believe that Bascom, who looks to his colleagues in the humanities "for guidance in the literary analysis of folklore, and for cooperation on the problems of style and the creative role of the narrator," (Dundes 1965:33) does not understand that a good literary analysis depends on a sensitivity for function. The function used by literary critics is on a micro-scale. How does this line or image function within the body of the text? Why did the author include this metaphor? The literary critic, like the anthropologist must understand and explicate each line of the text and every ritual in the society. Bascom is impatient with the literary critic because he searches for origins and gets bogged down in historical reconstruction (Dundes 1965:33). He is correct: the literary critic must move on. Does Bascom not see the parallel, however, with the functionalist dilemma? Have we anthropologists not spent thousands of pages trying to distinguish between why the pig is profane and the cow sacred? Have we not looked to the origins of cultural devices to understand their utility? Good literary criticism and good anthropological analysis both involve a deciphering of meaning. Perhaps this is why

anthropologists such as Victor Turner, Clifford Geertz and Alan Dundes have brought to anthropological theory much of the theory used by literary critics.

The literary critic and the anthropologist differ less in style than in focus. Here I believe that the literary critic has the advantage. In order to do a literary analysis that emphasizes the creativity of the author rather than the imagination of the critic, the analyst must understand the background of the author. Often this involves historical or biographical study as well as form analysis. The literary scholar accepts the importance of context in the understanding of a single work. It is the anthropologist who has not been taught that the symbolic exploration of text (oral or written) is a vital resource that he often ignores. Anyone who wishes to explicate a text must be acutely aware of the metaphor and idiom in which he works. In order to understand folkloric text the anthropologist must perform the opposite function of the literary scholar. Instead of assuming that the text belongs to a much larger world of meaning, the anthropologist must consider the text to have a life of its own, an organic analogy. Within the body of the text he must find symbol systems, inter-textual metaphors, and analogies. Once he has identified some patterns within the text he should reemerge to find similar patterns in the larger societal frame. He should look for a similar pattern that occurs in some ritual, and ask himself if there is a

connection. In this way the anthropologist would force himself to think "like a native," using folklore in the same way the native does. This is one way to understand the content of folklore as well as the function of folklore within society. It forces the anthropologist to appreciate the mode of expression as well as the expression. Once the anthropologist can analyze with an emic perspective, he can hunt for etic associations.

There are many variables involved in the telling of a legend. How many people are present, how many tellers are relating the narrative, the time of the telling with regard to external events; all of these contextual factors influence the meaning of a tale along with its textual meaning. In this examination of legend I will combine a textual with a contextual analysis to demonstrate the multiple dimensions of its meaning. The significance of legend lies both in its narrative line, the story told, and in the social and historical setting of its performance. In one sense, a legend has meaning only in its telling and is thus a story brought to life in each narration or re-creation.

The assertions made above may be demonstrated by an analysis of the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue. This legend contains many different legend types. Most of the narrative can be categorized as an historical legend, that is a legend ~~recants~~ concerns events that have occurred at definite times and places in the past, about national figures such as

Abraham Lincoln and the beginnings of the Civil War. As with many historical legends, there are numerous versions of the tale that have differing meanings depending on the separate interpretations of the tellers and the audience.

The Oberlin-Wellington Rescue is also a kind of local legend, a legend type that relates the shared memory of historical events in a confined area. Also present is the belief element of the legend, where Divine Providence gives the rescuers hope and strength. One of the major literary themes in the story also suggests that the Wellington Rescue is a religious legend. We may even categorize the legend as exemplum. It is important to categorize a legend into its many legend types because such classification aids in determining the form of contextual research used by the analyst. For instance, by categorizing the Rescue as a belief legend, it becomes obvious that the historical and current religious beliefs of the community must be examined in order to determine why a particular portion of the tale is retold. On the other hand, if the legend represents an exemplum, a narrative told to illustrate moral and religious principles (Lindahl, Rikoon, Lowless 1979:20), it may be necessary to dissect the structure of the legend to see how the morality of the community is representing a larger theme of Christianity.

Having established the importance of the context of the legend scholarship, I will now recount some of the pertinent

history of Oberlin, both at the time of the rescue and more recently, so that we may examine the context of the story itself.

The Oberlin-Wellington rescue historically occurred on September 13, 1858, twenty-five years after the founding of the college. The most recent version of the tale I collected was performed (as history) on the one hundred and thirtieth anniversary of the rescue, in Oberlin College's Goodrich Room in Mudd Library. An outside speaker, writing a historical monograph on the rescue, came to speak on this commemorative occasion. Present at this meeting were some of my informants, who had previously done work, and taken an active part in the retelling and publicizing of the legend.

One such person was Bill Long, one of the most politically active members of the town. Long has written two plays on the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue. The first version was written for dramatization in the Oberlin middle-school, but was also performed in part during Oberlin's 1988 Heritage Days celebration in First Church. The play was adapted from Fletcher's A History of Oberlin College: From its Foundation Through the Civil War. The second play, more imaginative than the first, was also written for the town, but Long is actively trying get it nation-wide exposure. Long had had previous contact with the September thirteenth speaker, Nat Brant. Years ago Long had contacted a CBS film writer in hopes of having his play broadcast. This producer/film maker

put Long in contact with her husband Nat Brant, the commemorative speaker in the Goodrich Room.

Also present that night was Geoffrey Blodgett, a professor of history at the College, and also an Oberlin historian. Blodgett wrote an article for the Alumni Magazine entitled "Myth and Reality in Oberlin History" on the distinctions that must be made between history and local legend. The article concludes that each has its place. His work hints at the very nature of the Oberlin-Wellington historical legend. "Which is more important, the legend or the facts?" He suggests that the central myth of the Oberlin abolitionist tradition is the Wellington Rescue (Bauman 1988:1). The rescue's long term significance is that it:

> 'Reinforced Oberlin's sense of separation from the world of Orthodoxy, from outside authority, from the accepted norms of conventional society, from the arrangements of the establishment (Bauman 1988:1).

The Oberlin Archivist, Roland Bauman, introduced Nat Brant, by discussing the ways that Oberlin local legend and history dovetail:

> The fact that fifteen years later Fletcher would have popularized the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue should not come as any surprise. For with the passage of time this event has increasingly been dramatized...The Oberlin-Wellington rescue brought prominence if not fame to the participants and the town (Bauman 1988:1).

Larry Garra in the 1988 issue of Timeline also reminds listeners that the Oberlin legends associated with the Underground Railroad affect our understanding of Oberlin. "The Oberlin-Wellington Rescue produced much of Oberlin's

reputation as a thriving [underground railroad] station." Many of these legends are historically inaccurate (Bauman 1988:1).

Among the cast of characters present at Nat Brant's lecture was the living history associated with the rescue. There were four very old women at the lecture, ranging from their sixties to their early nineties who were related to members of the Rescue. These women demanded a great deal of attention and walked about with an air of importance and dignity. The Archivist greeted them as one would someone deserving a great deal of respect. The eldest lady of the party was given particular attention. Nat Brant paid respects to her before he began his speech. The ladies received many social niceties that evening. These women, who were related to local heroes from the underground railroad in Oberlin, lent validity to the subject. One woman had a relative who received runaway slaves and send them to Canada. Another was a relative of one of the Oberlin men who was executed with John Brown after Harpers Ferry. These kind ladies provided a wealth of knowledge, and were very willing to relate the details of the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue. They had already given Nat Brant a good deal of their time.

Now our stage is set for some of the modern interpretations for the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue, but there is also a historical stage to consider. I will take a momentary leap back into historical time so that we can

understand the textual portions of the legend, and then ponder the modern contextual effect that the legend holds for the community.

I hope the reader will not expect that the legend, changed by modern contextual reference, is an allegory. The parallels I have found in the legend come from the Old and New Testament, but these Biblical allusions arise because the populace of 1858 are steeped in the language of the Old and New Testaments.

Now comes the task of textual analysis. This is the most difficult portion of folklore analysis. Who is right? How can we know if there is any connection between the results of the analysis and the reality of the legend? We look to literary theory for our answer. If an interpretation aids us in understanding the legend, and does not contradict it in any way, then the analysis is probably correct. Also, we may use our sensitivity for the symbol to help us to interpret legend. If a symbol found within the structure of a legend continually parallels a symbolic structure found elsewhere in the society, a connection may be assumed. Because legend was once a memorate that had a personal symbol, that was universalized through many tellings, it should encompass a group symbolic value, and perhaps the remnants of personal symbol. Interpretation depends on presentation, group dynamics and the extent to which group and individual symbol are part of the legend being retold.

How much is the audience being catered to? How much can the teller intuit how the group will receive his story?

Before providing an analysis, I will sketch an outline of the events of the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue. For further readings, see Bill Long's play in the appendix.

John Price, a runaway slave, came to Oberlin in January, 1856. He obtained employment and remained there until the summer of that year, when Anderson Jennings, a slave hunter and neighbor to Price's master John Bacon, spotted Price in Oberlin. Jennings, secured the power of attorney from Bacon, went to the United States Commissioner, and received a warrant for Price's apprehension. Jennings received help from Democratic sympathizers of the Fugitive Slave Act, Lewis W. Boynton, an Oberlin farmer, and Fitch, a saloon keeper. Lewis Boynton's twelve year old son Shakespeare was offered twenty dollars to decoy Price out of Oberlin where the marshals could arrest John Price out of the view of the Oberlinians who were avid abolitionists and known to make trouble for slave catchers. Shakespeare took Price in his carriage on the pretext of digging potatoes, and Price was apprehended two miles north of Oberlin.

From Oberlin Road, the party started to Wellington, intending to later take Price to Columbus and then back to Kentucky. Two Oberlin men saw the party on the road and sounded the alarm in Oberlin. A crowd of two hundred Oberlinians, including some of the most prominent members of the community (Plumb, Peck, Bushnell, Hughes) were on their way to Wellington. Price was being kept prisoner in Wadsworth House while the slave catchers waited for the Columbus train. Some guns were carried by Oberlinians, the numbers vary according to the who tells the story. Gradually Oberlinians members crowded the room in which Price was captured and pushed him from the room and into an Oberlin bound wagon. Price was returned to Oberlin where he was kept in hiding in Professor Fairchild's basement, and after three days was conveyed to Canada.

The rescue raised the issue of support of the Fugitive Slave Act for the conservatives, and the Federal Grand Jury of the Circuit Court for the Northern District of Ohio charged fifteen of the twenty-one rescuers with confounding the Fugitive Slave Act. They were arrested and let go on their own recognizance with the promise of appearing in court the next day. These men appeared in court on December 9, 1858, and pleaded not guilty to the charges on the grounds that they were serving a higher law, the law of God.

At the Palmer House in Oberlin, January 11, 1858, thirty-seven Lorain County residents: those indicted, their

friends, wives and children had a supper, the "feast of felons." where they pledged their support to the abolition of the Fugitive Slave Act.

By the middle of May two convictions were made: Simian Bushnell (who carted Price back to Oberlin) and Charles H. Langston, a black Oberlin lawyer were found guilty. Bushnell was fined six hundred dollars, court fees, and sentenced to sixty days in jail. Langston, who had made a famous plea to the court for humanity, was fined one hundred dollars and sentenced to twenty days in jail. Along with fourteen other men, these two had been in prison since April 15. At the end of Bushnell's trial, the fourteen men dismissed their council, called no more witnesses and set up no defence. The prosecutor asked that they be thrown in jail. They remained in jail as a point of honor, refusing to post bail so they not appear to be common criminals. Later they were offered their freedom, but refused it because they resented the prosecutor's action. The Oberlinians found a great deal of support in Cleveland. Speeches were made from the jail, and Cleveland liberals sent a petition to the jailed of five hundred names in their support, and several thousand paraded by the jail. Four hundred Sunday school children were brought to the jail where their superintendent, the Jailed Mr. Peck, preached to them. The Oberlinians published a one volume newspaper while in jail, the Rescuer.

A writ of habeas corpus was requested from the Republican court, but was denied, Republican Chief Justice Swan casting the deciding vote against the writ.

One crucial night the Rescuers were giving up hope, but Peck's Bible fell to the floor and opened to the twenty seventh psalm. The Oberlinians perceived this as a sign from God and hope was restored.

Finally members of Lorain county charged Jennings and the Marshals with kidnapping. While the Oberlinians had to face an entirely Democratic jury, the kidnappers would have to face a Republican one. An arrangement was made to exchange the prisoners.

The Oberlinians had a triumphant welcome back after having served eighty six days in jail. The Oberlin traitors were kicked out of town.

The whole event lead to the Fugitive Slave Act becoming a central concern of the Republican platform, and the eventual election of President Lincoln. The Oberlin-Wellington Rescue has been referred to as the act that started the Civil War (Phillips 1933:76-89, Brant 1988, Fletcher 1970 Long 1960).

Perhaps the most striking facet of legend is the way it creates a series of dichotomies that must in some way be joined. The first dichotomous set is that of space and

freedom. The rescuers all speak of a higher law than the law of the land. This was their strategy in the court. The slaves are connoted with diggers of the land. So, there are really three levels of vertical movement in the legend: below the ground, John Price's digging of potatoes, the law of the land, the Fugitive Slave Act that the kidnappers work with, and the law of God, that the Oberlin residents fight for. In the legend therefore, we can see the outsider's perspective on the law of the land. Yet the Oberlinian's perspective of this vertical line may have been quite different. In the "Oberlin Covenant," the document that all early Oberlinians signed pledging their dedication to God and the simple life, we see two points that suggest an attempt at a different perspective. In the Covenant, we see that the white people identified themselves as workers of the land, slaves to God. Statute number three of the Covenant says "We will hold in possession no more property than we can profitably manage for God, as his faithful stewards." This is in opposition to what the slave holders believe. Slave owners hold more land than they can till or use, and so use enslaved persons to aid them in their personal profit from the land. Oberlinians might identify more with the slaves of the land than the slave holders who are not stewards to God. Also apparent in the covenant, are the last two statutes that seem to bear the seeds of the Rescue in them:

> 11. We will make special efforts to sustain the institutions of the gospel at home and among our

neighbors.
12. We will strive to maintain deep-toned and elevated personal piety, to "provoke each other to love and good works," to live together in all things as brethren, and to glorify God in our bodies and spirits which are his.

These last two passages imply that Oberlin members felt they had the right to use force in the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue, because they were provoking their neighbors to love and good works-- in short they were serving Divine Law. Three documents, then, play a very important role in the Oberlin Rescue: the Oberlin Covenant, the statement of purpose for the founding of the Oberlin Colony; the Fugitive Slave Act, the Constitutional act that states that all runaway slaves may be recaptured and returned to their masters; and the Holy Bible, the basis for the rebellion. This is the theory from which the Oberlin-Wellington rescue was born. To an Oberlinian the notion of "slave" is "Christian." The Christian is the slave of God, therefore how can a man own another man's body? Where people are the servants of the law, slaves are the servants of white men. Similarly, we find that according to American law, under which the Oberlinians were imprisoned in Cleveland, men can lose their freedom by breaking the law of the land. There are then three relationships to slavery, and three relationships to the land: the Christian is the slave to God, Men are the slaves to the Law, and Black men are slaves to white men. Similarly, Black men work the land as slaves, White men work the land for profit, and Christians work the land for God.

Many levels of freedom are challenged in the rescue, as are many levels of servitude. Loyalty and punishment are the main themes of the rescue. I will approach the legend chronologically to examine the symbolic aspects the Christians felt were synonymous with the rescue. There seems in Fletcher's rendition of the Rescue to be an archetypal action that echoes the life of Jesus. It is not difficult to understand this parallel because the people living in Oberlin under the covenant tried to live as much like their Savior as possible.

Judas on the Line

Shakespeare Boynton's role in the rescue may represent the alternative to servitude: he is the betrayer; the young man who betrays John Price, the escaped slave, to the deputy marshals. This twelve year old boy is on the periphery: he is a child, yet he is also an Oberlinian. The conflict between good and bad in Boynton is expressed in the language that Fletcher uses in his description: he was called a "rather elfish twelve year old boy" who later testified in court: "Expect I am a son of [Lewis Boynton], but it's hard telling now-a-days" (Fletcher 1971:403). Shakespeare dwells around the saloon, also a forbidden place according to the Oberlin Covenant. He seems to play the role of the Oberlin Judas: He betrays Price on the pretext of friendship for a sum of money. Yet he is, from Fletcher's description, sub-

natural. First he loses his natural status by denying his natural father, so that he resembles a changeling, and then his words can be interpreted figuratively to imply disbelief in his spiritual father: he is a non-Christian.

Shakespeare abducts John Price in a carriage on the pretext of a friendly pleasure ride, a temporary relief of the burden the slave has born. Boynton is the vehicle for action outside of Oberlin. Price is then removed from Oberlin grounds, leaving the Godly territory of Oberlin.

The Fourteen Stations and the Ascension

Most slaves arrived in Oberlin on the Underground Railroad, an institution that connotes a resurrection into the light of Oberlin (sometimes thought literally to be underground tunnels). The slaves are taken up from the ground and delivered into freedom. The scene depicting John Price's rescue from the Wellington hotel room seems to echo the Fourteen Stations of the Cross, leading to Price's resurrection:

> the participants were not all "saints" of Oberlin. Somebody in the hall stuck his fist through a stovepipe hole and punched Anderson Jennings in the head!...Winsor seized John Price; the door was pushed open, and he was passed over the heads of the crowd down the stairs and out into the street where he was thrown heels-up into Bushnell's buckboard. There was much hurrahing and Bushnell drove off in a cloud of dust toward Oberlin...After spending three days and nights in a back chamber at the Fairchild's, John went on to Canada and was never heard from again (Fletcher 1970:405).

As we recall the moment by moment play of the Stations in

Christianity, we may observe the same sort of description used by Fletcher. The finale occurs when Price's rescue is compared with the Ascension: after three days and nights Price leaves his tomb, a back chamber, and he literally and symbolically rises as Jesus did, and ascends up North not exactly to heaven, but to Canada and freedom. The references to the Ascension in the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue make the slave, the persecuted, closely resemble the Messiah, who was persecuted for all of mankind.

The Last Supper: Old Testament to New

Bill Long entitled his play on the Oberlin Wellington Rescue The Feast of Felons. This catchy phrase was invented by the rescuers at a crucial time in the rescue process. They were very conscious of the effect that they were having on the rest of the world and chose to become martyrs. The Wellington portion of the rescuers were released from legal charges, and only Oberlinians were to appear at the trial. They were determined to plead not guilty to charges. Fletcher depicts the feast of felons in his account of the rescue:

> Oberlin and its Republican friends welcomed the test. A great change had taken place in the public opinion in northern Ohio since the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law. Oberlin found itself actually popular among the majority of its neighbors on the reserve!...On January 11, 1895, twenty six of the "Rescuers" and a larger number of their friends and sympathizers from Oberlin and elsewhere held a banquet and organization meeting--the "Felon's Feast." A sumptuous dinner was provided... "Stirring sentiments and speeches" were listened to for

> nearly five hours. Ralph Plumb responded to the toast: "The Alien and Sedition law of 1798 and the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850-- alike arbitrary, undemocratic and unconstitutional." A committee of five members was selected for "defence and offence." A rescue fund was established...it was evident that not only the men from Oberlin but Oberlin, itself and the Republican Party were on trial...Justice it can be fairly said, was aimed at by nobody at the time. The prosecution and the court sought to crucify Oberlin and the Republican party and vindicate the Administration. The prisoners and the defense sought a martyrdom which would expose the essential tyranny of the Fugitive Slave Law and gain votes for the Republicans (Fletcher 1970:406).

From this we see not only the remnants of the Passover Seder that became the Last Supper, where Jesus spoke with his disciples, and the fate of the Messiah was planned out, but also the abandonment of the old laws, perhaps the laws of the older testament of the Democrats, and the acceptance of the new Republican testament to be: Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation after the Civil War. Surely the rise of Jesus to the throne of God is a perpetual bleeding wound: it is a Civil War between the Jews and Romans (temporarily united on one side), and the Christians, on the other side. The felon's feast, may then be compared on a vertical plane from the replacement of the Old Testament with the New Testament to the Replacing of an old law in the Constitution with a new one. Certainly Fletcher's retelling sounds as if the Democrats were the Roman law bearers who sought "to crucify Oberlin" as Jesus was crucified, and Oberlinians who "sought a martyrdom" were the willing sacrifice, as Jesus willingly ascended the cross. Oberlinians put themselves on the cross to save the slave John Price: Oberlin identified with the

slaves, and Oberlinians, like slaves, were "crucified." The separation of the Oberlinians from the Wellington portion of the rescue is significant because it makes Oberlin stand alone. In Nat Brant's depiction of the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue, the Wellington version is underplayed, if not negated. His legend is really the telling of only the Oberlin Rescue. Just as Jesus stood alone on the cross the modern day Oberlinians prefer to believe that they stood alone.

Fly Away Peter, Fly Away Paul

Fletcher uses religious language to retell the Oberlinian's trial, but apparently there was also a good deal of religious symbolism actually used in the courtroom to remind the Oberlinians, who flew from Oberlin to Wellington, to Cleveland and then back to their home, that they were far from home, and away from their element they seemed like devils. Fletcher describes the courtroom scene:

> The District Attorney ridiculed the "Saints of Oberlin" and condemned Higher Law as "Devil's Law." "Higher Law people ran into the predicament of free love and infidelity," he told the jury. "If St. Peck and St. Plumb 'go off' in this new law, he would advise them to go where some good man preaches the Bible and not politics. Do you preach the Bible at Oberlin or do you point out the spires of the churches as hell poles?" Albert Gallatin Riddle, counsel for the defense, eulogized the men of Oberlin who had stood at "the front, striking with us blow for blow for freedom." (Fletcher 1970:407).

There is in this scene not only the mocking of the saints, the martyrs of Christ, but the obvious degradation of the

martyrs that accompanied their attempts to institutionalize a new morality. By the District Attorney's words being quoted to an Oberlin audience, the words assume new meaning, in fact the opposite meaning for the Oberlin listeners: Oberlin was founded to be a kind of utopian society, and the "hell poles" insult contains the reverse effect on an Oberlin crowd. The spires become towers to heaven, the taunted professors become martyrs for the cause, examples of humility. The council's "eulogy" is the mock death of the Oberlinians which figuratively wins the martyrs a place in heaven as saints. The final release of the Rescuers is comparable to Christ's Entry into Jerusalem, but we will examine this later. The scorn of one's enemies is praise to one's ears. Again, the D.A.'s words connote a double meaning to the Oberlin listeners: when he says that they "go off," his words to an Oberlin crowd mean not only ranting and raving, but also leaving Oberlin. The D.A.'s words in the Oberlin legend serve as a warning to listeners not to leave the safety of their environment or they will be punished by the enemy outside.

Hell, Propaganda on the Mount, and the Epistles

The jail cells that the Oberlin inhabitants were forced to live in seem to provide polyvocal Christian imagery in the Oberlin Rescue. Fletcher says that "the jail was no palace, and lunatics were housed in the same building," and that the

Oberlinians literally set up shop, a cobbler shop and a saddle shop, in the jail confines. We recall that insane people were considered to be possessed by the devil, and that by association the prison was representative of hell. Pandemonium was Milton's name for Satan's palace, where gold was discovered and mines tapped for riches. Jesus went into hell, to preach and took up with him the patriarchs and all those who were unbaptized before he came to earth. Clearly the Oberlinians were in hell. A letter from J.M. Fitch written in jail illustrates the hellish imagery of the situation while also showing the Oberlinians as bringing salvation to those who never knew of their cause:

> "We are sure our enemies-- the blasphemous enemies of God and humanity are finding that the farther they go the deeper they sink. We are animated to see that these oppressive, unfair and inhuman proceedings are preaching to the state and the nation more effectually than a thousand of us could do if our lives should be devoted to the work. This is enough. May the God of the poor use us, and these stirring events to awaken a sleeping church and a sleeping State to a knowledge of the fact that the bolts of heaven are hanging over us and the wrath of heaven is out against us because of our indifference to the Miseries of his suffering poor..."

At the same time Fletcher continues that "There is no doubt that the Rescue Case...was exceedingly fruitful of converts to the Republican party and the anti-slavery cause." (Fletcher 1970:411).

Oberlinians were also aware of the propaganda value of their circumstance. There were numerous letters going to and from the jail with communications of blessing and directions for the community to follow. These letters are reminiscent

of the Epistles, letters sent from the devotees of Jesus to their communities from jail.

Professor Peck's speeches recall occurrences like Matthew's depiction of the Sermon on the Mount:

> Professor Peck was allowed to preach to a crowd in the jail-yard from a doorway of the jail building. On another occasion the Oberlin Sabbath School was taken to Cleveland on the train (Fletcher 1970:408).

Oberlinians in bondage were working on the same level as the Apostles. The whole rescue seems to be motivated by the Sermon on the Mount:

> Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake...Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.(St. Matthew 5:10,11,14).

The message that an Oberlin crowd would get from this portion of the legend might be that out of Oberlin there is danger, yet the Oberlin word must be spread because it is the word of God. It reconfirms Oberlin's values, while establishing notions of peril and refuge. Oberlin is refuge, and the rest of the world is peril, but this peril must be confronted in order to bring honor to Oberlin. It is a lesson of strength, and teaches listeners to hold fast to their values and respect the minority rather than the majority, for "few may sometimes know when thousands err."

Christ's Entry into Jerusalem

There are many more examples of religious imagery in the

Oberlin-Wellington Rescue (there is even a miracle that occurs when Peck's Bible, opens to the twenty-seventh psalm just as the Oberlinians begin to question their strength) but this will be our last textual example of the life of Jesus and the Rescue. The home coming in the rescue was a grand affair:

> many hundreds of citizens and students, including all the Fire companies in uniform [were there.]... When the procession reached the church, bouquets and wreaths of flowers were thrown upon the Rescuers which were caught upon their arms or head and thus worn into the church, and as they marched throughout the isles and ascended the platform, such deafening and tremendous shouts of applause greeted them (Fletcher 1970:411).

As Jesus went to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, palm leaves and roses were thrown in his path. It was his triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Home Sweet Home.

The Meaning for Oberlin

The deeper levels of the Christian subplot in the Rescue serve many purposes. First they supply the upper level of a local story with a powerful, resonating authority. Notions of peril and refuge are strengthened, and Oberlin values are solidified when backed by God. It supplies a timeless cosmic importance to an already historically significant event.

The Oberlin Rescue legend contains spiritual, national and local messages, and all of these messages become interchangeable as the legend unfolds: Peck is both a saint and the Savior. Simultaneously he is a proto-President Lincoln because he plays the part of liberator of the slaves

several years before the fact. He also plays the part of the Christian who is servant to God, and the man who nearly gives in to his weakness (before the Bible falls open). Even further, Peck becomes the fugitive slave, by taking John Price's place in bondage so that he may go free. Again the symbolic structure takes a vertical alignment that is very similar to the European notion of the Great Chain of Being.

Notions of good and evil are also explored in the legend. While it is clear that most good is found within Oberlin and most evil comes from the outside, troublesome characters, such as Shakespeare Boynton, from within Oberlin travel between the two worlds. Good and evil seem to be related to the previously discussed notions of peril and refuge. There is peril within the refuge as we see with Boynton, and while Oberlinians are taught to trust their neighbors, they are also taught to be skeptical of those neighbors who wander too far from the established local beliefs. We recall that Boynton is compared to an elf, and that he wanders in and out of bars.

We must wonder why there is such distrust of the outside and the non-conformists in Oberlin when it is a society of non-conformity. When we recall that the Oberlin Rescue occurred only twenty-five years after the founding of the college: it is easier to understand the necessity of creating bonds from within by continually looking out. Oberlin was experiencing what Victor Turner would call communitas: where

the structure of the group depends entirely on the construction of the outside group. Oberlin could see itself best as the mirror of the nation, and as a reflection of the Bible. It was an unstable construction. Yet the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue in part served to connect Oberlin to the outside world. Because the Rescue brought Oberlin national acclaim, and because in part the product of the rescue was the election of President Lincoln and then the beginning of the Civil War, Oberlin became a recognized institution from within and from without.

It might not be too bold, then, to say that the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue is one of Oberlin's creation myths, though it occurred so long after its official founding. I believe that the Rescue legend's status as a creation myth/legend is one of the prime reasons for its continued existence and reinterpretation today. In the next chapter I will try to show why Bill Long and other Oberlinians maintain this legend even today, and the purposes that it serves in the continually changing town of Oberlin.

Old Legends, New Moods: A Contextual Approach

In the last chapter I attempted a textual approach to the legend. In this chapter I would like to examine the ways that legend changes as it is told by parties with different interests, a contextual approach, that is elucidated by the ethnographic background of the teller and listener. Malinowski wrote in his classic essay "Myth in Primitive Psychology" about the importance of performance orientation and social and cultural contexts in understanding myth:

> The text, of course, is extremely important, but without the context it remains lifeless...The interest of the story is vastly enhanced and it is given its proper character by the manner in which it is told. The whole nature of the performance, the voice and the mimicry, the stimulus and the response of the audience mean as much to the natives as the text; and the sociologist should take his cue from the natives. The performance, again, has to placed in its proper setting-- the hour of day, and the season, with the background of the sprouting gardens awaiting future work and by the magic...We must also bear in mind the sociological context of private ownership, the sociable function and the cultural role of amusing fiction. All these elements are equally relevant; all must be studied as well as the text. The stories live in native life and not on paper, and when a scholar jots them down without being able to evoke the atmosphere in which they flourish he has given us but a mutilated bit of reality (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1975:105).

I would like to momentarily return to the Goodrich Room in Mudd Library where Nat Brant was giving his account of the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue. In the audience, to the extreme right of the horseshoe of seats, carefully scrutinizing the lecture, sat Bill Long. He had moved his seat forward, breaking the continuity of the neat rows, and sat with his arms crossed over his chest. He was leaning back in an easy,

yet challenging posture.

As mentioned earlier, Long has written two dramatic versions of the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue. The first is a twenty five page rendition, originally used as a teaching devise for Oberlin middle-school children. His second play is a more imaginative version of the Rescue, written for a more knowledgeable audience. Long has hopes that this play will be performed at a national level (his second play may be examined in the appendix).

Because many factors influence the meaning of a legend, it is important to discuss various extra-textual factors that bear on its telling. Context can elucidate the symbolism in a legend and thus reveal its meaning within the society.

Bill Long began performing the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue legend for seventh graders in the Langston Middle School in the early sixties. Sandra Padwani, one of the teachers at the Middle School, approached Long, then the head of the Coop Bookstore, asking if the Coop would donate books as prizes for students who won contests at a United Nations dinner. Long gave a short speech as when he delivered the prizes. His children were in the Oberlin public school system, so he had multiple motives for becoming a participant in the classroom. Long didn't remember when he first told the Rescue story, but he was invited back each year to retell the narrative. His presentation gradually got more complex.

When asked why he chose to reshape the Rescue story over another Oberlin legend, he explained:

> I was impressed by the story and I was impressed by the connection-- the connection between what had happened back there in the nineteenth century and what was going on, Mccarthy days and subsequent to that. And I was also... when the fuss started between blacks and whites and I got into more and more detail of the story, I was also impressed by the fact that this was an early demonstration of black and white people working together in Oberlin. And I kept pointing that out in the political talks, some of the vocal political stuff with black people.... One time I did a program over in Finney Chapel with the...uh... primarily the court scene again, and had two different people reading, I was one of the readers and somebody else was reading, uh, reading directly from Shipard's book, then I made some other comparisons between a French revolutionary....by the name of Baboeun...., he was involved in the French Revolution, but he was the most radical of them all because he was not only interested in the political aspects of it, but in the economic aspects of it.... I dug up some information on him, but there was a connection there I mean he... there was a famous trial where he defied everybody. He said he was a product of Rousseau and the great liberals who did all the writing and stirred up everybody prior to the French revolution. And that was his defense-- Matter of fact the book [He used to find out more about Baboeun] was called <u>The Defense of Anton Baboeun</u>. And he made his stirring speech.
>
> Interviewer: So that's directly related to Charles Langston's Speech...
>
> Long: Another similar situation, except on a much larger scale since it was involved with the French Revolution.
>
> Interviewer: What was the conflict between the blacks and whites, the more modern one, that was causing you to see the connection with Oberlin?
>
> Long: Martin Luther King is the first example of the way the whole business in the sixties and to some extent in the early seventies and the anti-war protests around Vietnam...What Martin Luther King stirred up and the reaction against him, and then what the students stirred up, and then it got down finally to this question of a man's conscience against the right of the state.

Long added a visual device to his classroom talks. A black college student whom he had lent money to, paid his debt back in the form of a painting of John Price, the slave in the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue, in chains. (Three paintings of Oberlin-Wellington Rescue scenes now hang over the cash register in the Coop Bookstore.) The young artist created the canvas of the slave from his self-portrait. Long brought this first painting to his classroom talks, keeping it face back until the right moment when he would dramatically "unveil" it. He was amazed at its effect on the students, especially the black students. Later he wrote his first version of The Feast of Felons that has been performed three times in Oberlin. The first presentation occurred when he took the Langston Middle School children to the courthouse and they read from The Feast. Next the play was performed in Hall Auditorium at the end of Winter Term. It was the finally to some Oberlin College students' Winter Term project, retracing the path of the underground railroad. The third performance, during the town's Heritage Days Celebration in the summer of 1988, was the dramatic recreation of the courtroom scene of Feast of Felons. Bill Long played the role of Jennings, the bigoted slave catcher.

Long has been very active, and influenced by politics, as his record in the town suggests. He was active in obtaining equal employment and equal pay for blacks in Oberlin long before it was politically acceptable. He has

shown his dedication to the Civil Rights movement by speaking to the blacks about political issues, hiring a representative percentage of blacks in the Coop for equal pay, and fighting for a fair housing code that helps blacks fix their houses with city loans and allows them to integrate their housing in Oberlin.[1]

Long's connection to the Rescue becomes clear as we examine his second version of the Feast of Felons. Long looked for a hero, a central character with whom the audience could sympathize. He chose as his main character Charles Langston, a hot-headed, passionate black lawyer who was dedicated to the freedom of the black people. In Long's rendition, Langston is torn between the many conflicting devices he can employ to effect change. First Langston is offered a nomination for candidacy on the Republican ticket. This would involve going into politics to make the political changes needed to end the Fugitive Slave Act, and his people's oppression. It would also involve making compromises to gain the votes of a wide variety of people. Langston is not pleased with the balancing act. He wants to take whole-hearted action. He is a particularly skillful orator, but his heart is set on revolt. Second, Langston is tempted by John Brown, who was actually closely affiliated

---

[1] For more information on Bill Long I refer the reader to Wildovsky's Small Town Politics in which there is a chapter devoted exclusively to Long; and to the Oberlin oral history archives, available on request from Alan Patterson, a teacher at Langston Middle School.

with the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue, to become a volunteer soldier in the revolutionary separatist movement, and take arms to fight at Harper's Ferry. Again Langston is tempted. He wants immediate action. Long fictitiously heightens and exaggerates the components of the Rescue. In the Oberlin-Wellington incident the rescuers are called to arms in an emergency and so Langston's decision is simultaneously made. He goes off to aid the kidnapped slave.

The Rescue is both political and revolutionary. The rescuers eventually use force to free John Price, and the rest of the tale is about the political effects of their actions. The trial confronts the issue of "higher law," man's conscience and God's will versus the powerful letter of the law. Langston becomes both a revolutionary and a politician who serves God's law. He answers both of his calls, but destroys his chances of joining the congress or John Brown's revolt at Harper's Ferry (see the play in the appendix).

The anthropologist examining a literary work must ask similar questions to those asked by the psychologist or literary critic. We must wonder why Long chose to characterize Charles Langston in the manner he did. In fact Langston's brother was asked to run for office and John Brown did try to recruit many Oberlin Blacks to join in the Harpers Ferry revolt.

In order to understand Long's characterization, we must

examine his personal experiences. Bill Long was brought up in Baltimore, and was encouraged to become a fundamentalist preacher. He began to question his faith when he attended a Christian summer camp and many of his burgeoning questions could not be answered satisfactorily. He continued his participation in Christian youth groups and, a natural leader and organizer, he tried to implement many of the plans the group made. He was frustrated by the immobility of the group. A professor with a Communist bent suggested he attend some of the Communist youth groups. Long found that there was a good deal of implementation and action in these groups and that like his church group, they helped supply meals for the needy, but they were also active in black rights. As a member of these groups he became exposed to black-white relations.

As a religious Christian Long registered as a conscientious objector for the draft, but he withdrew this title when he felt that he must fight. In the army he was sent to officer's candidate school, and then sent to work among blacks in the segregated ambulance corp. He believes he was sent to work with the segregated units because of his Baltimore origins, and because he knew how to "deal" with them.

In college he became even more interested in politics and was editor of Heidleberg's school newspaper. He did not like the extreme Republican atmosphere at the college, and in

an April Fools issue he printed a copy with a hammer and sickle asking for a Communist speaker "to even out the information." He was forced to resign from the paper.

Long says that he was considered liberal, rash, brash and opinionated in his political views. There seems to be a direct parallel in Long's life with the Charles Langston that he depicted in his second play. Long, like Langston, was torn between politics, religion, and revolution. Long denies any conscious connection. He does admit, however, that some of the devices he employs in his play are conscious outlets for the expression his frustrations with the Republicans, such as the speeches made at the feast by the attending waiters.

Bill Long is aware of the effects that story tellers can have on their audience's understanding of history. He said of his own play that if it were to be found many years later he would be sure that the fabrications would be taken as true despite the introduction that reveals the fictive portions. He is also aware that the written word is more persuasive and authoritative than oral narrative. This may be one reason that he chose to create a written record of the legend that he began telling orally. It is from Long's observation that I argue that legend need not be regarded solely as an oral rendition in our literate society. Legends embody shared symbols which encompass teller and audience in a common history and community.

Long believes that he works with the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue from an historical framework. When asked why he felt free to add a fictive portion to the history, and why he has been perpetually invited into history classes to relate it orally (while most children gather history, even Oberlin history, from textbooks) he concedes that there is indeed an oral, and legendary element to the story.

Many of the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue tradition-bearers were present at Nat Brant's lecture in the Goodrich room. Brant is an outsider writing a monograph on the Rescue entitled The Town that Started the Civil War. Nat Brant was introduced to the Rescue legend by Bill Long. Long had contacted Brant's wife, a television producer, in hopes of getting her interested in working with his play. Brant's wife told Long to call her novelist husband who might be interested. Brant was indeed interested and has been collecting data for two years to write his forthcoming book. Unfortunately, Long's play never became part of Brant's plans. I believe that Long's play can not enter a wider realm of interest until the local symbolic structures are eliminated, replaced with symbols that have relevance to an audience that is unfamiliar with Oberlin.

Brant has new plans concerning the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue. He intends to make the slave John Price the hero of his Rescue tale. He suggested his novel approach in his speech and seems to have explained this idea to Long in more

in detail. Brant's interpretation of Price departs from the 1883 recount of the tale where the slave has an extremely marginal role:

> The slave himself was a rather stupid and worthless fellow, but it was the principle for which the people were contending (Shumway and Brower 1883:37).

Long seems displeased with the new interpretation. He says that while Price certainly performed a heroic act by escaping from bondage, thousands of slaves have similar stories, and Price's involvement in the tale has little to do with the importance of the Rescue; he is rather a vehicle.

Brant's angle may indicate a current trend in contemporary black liberal thought. A professor at Oberlin College informed me that while a lecturer was telling the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue tale in Berkeley in the early 1970s, a black man in the crowd exclaimed he was tired of the whites always rescuing the blacks. The black awareness movement seems to have influenced Brant's interpretation of the legend. Long believes that if Brant's rendition continues to follow this current line of reasoning, the new story will not be told or read much by Oberlinians. Oberlin residents will not be hostile to the telling, but it will not interest them.

This lack of interest, or alienation, from the retelling of the tale may exist because the Oberlin symbol has been extracted from Brant's telling. The telling of legend is affected by contemporary events. What Dan Sperber suggests

about myth, may also be applied to legend: the properties that make legend memorable and transformable are the same. "The study of their transformation is not distinct from that of their own structure." (Sperber 1974:81) This may explain the numerous migrant tales that are claimed as unique to each culture that tells them. The bonds of the interpretation of history, and history's legendary expression seem to bisect. It is argued that the elasticity of legend comes from the fact that it is not recorded: it changes as the group needs it to change, and is retold with a new focal point by each story teller. It seems that the historical and legendary aspects of the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue change with the popular demands of the times. As our historical interpretations change with Marxist, Feminist, Structural, Deconstructionist, and Black Literary criticism, so do our legends, but on a smaller scale. It seems that the more "sophisticated" our analyses become, the more our history tends to mimic the patterns of folklore. It is ironic that folklore was dismissed by Tylor as a survival of the past: for now it may be used to predict patterns of the future. Folkloric interpretation seems to accompany historical interpretation in this literate society. The two genres are merging.

The item of interest here is the way a local legend changes when it is retold for a national audience. The legend has to cater to a larger audience. It must be

restructured so that there are no more emic Oberlin symbols. Where the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue legend, as told in Oberlin, contains references to the Oberlin Covenant. A national interpretation of the Rescue will have to rely on documents such as the Bill of Rights, transforming the local symbol systems and references into national symbols that encompass the experiences of the whole audience. Perhaps Long, as the Oberlin story teller who attempted to expand the local confines of his play to a national level, can now see the kind of changes that are necessary in order to create a mass market, but I doubt that he will employ them. As Long points out, the Oberlin circle will probably not be interested in the national retelling. The function of the piece is changed. One of the functions of Long's telling was to show how blacks and whites could work together in Oberlin.

The Oberlin tale has a different directional pattern from Brant's tale. Long's plays teaches Oberlin children and citizens how the outside world relates to them on the inside. Long used his play to help make sense of the Mccarthy era for Oberlin dwellers. World politics gained Oberlin relevance.

Brant is using his rendition of the Rescue for the opposite purpose: to show outsiders the way their social politics were employed in one town. In Long's piece, as well as in the rendition by Fletcher, the Rescue has demonstrated the way Oberlin, the small town fighting to enforce its belief system, could survive in opposition to the belief

systems of the outside world, thus the "higher law" theme. In Brant the focus becomes the town that started a war of national importance.

Long and others feel that Brant's connection is strained. Brant's rendition seems forced because he is attempting to create a symbolic importance to a larger audience, to make the Rescue a national symbol. He must replace the "insider" quality of the legend. This is why his interpretation caters more to broad, current national movements, and yet relies so much on detail, times and actual places. He needs to verify the story, to make it more than a local legend. The transcript of Brant's talk in the Goodrich room contains less usage of local symbol than either Fletcher's, the religious historian's, or Bill Long's, the activist's, retellings. Brant's retelling is not folklore because the symbol has little relevance to an inside audience. In Brant's telling we leave the realm of the town's traditions and begin to enter the realm of the nation's traditions: the crossing of the line may be where local legend ends and history begins.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have attempted to show the polyvocal meanings within legends. Legend contains the genetic structure of the community. It begins as a memorate, coded for one member's needs. It is gradually duplicated in the form of a fabulate where it receives an updated code, more general so that it is compatible for group use. As a fabulate, legend functions for the community as well as the individual. The memorate gene loses its specialization. Each time the legend is recalled, it is recoded by the narrator, temporarily regaining specialization that will serve the current group, only to lose specialization again until recalled. The memorate belongs only to the individual, yet, it has potential to function for the group. The fabulate has meaning for a more diverse audience, but meaning is found only in the storyline. The legend is a container. Its storyline is fixed, but the deeper symbolic structures are continually reorganized for the new demands of the group.

By examining the storyline of legends, the anthropologist can determine what is important to a group through time. Legend is in this sense a diachronic key to a culture. It may show what was and continues to be important. By examining the deeper symbolic structure of a legend, the anthropologist may gain a key to the synchronic aspects of a culture. The part of the legend that changes may be called the inner symbolic level. This level is intertwined with its

context. The inner symbolic level contains a symbol system that is parallel to another symbol system that exists elsewhere in the culture. For example the Christian references in Fletcher's rendition of the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue matches the Christian orientation of the community. Similarly the political references that appear in Long's rendition may be compared with the political climate of the late forties and early fifties. It is the inner symbolic meaning that allows a legend to function in its modern form. It is this structure that helps it convey its relevance for a modern audience.

By superimposing the diachronic storyline on the deeper symbolic structure, the anthropologist gains insight into the culture's metaphor. Through this palimpsest analysis the anthropologist may learn how the members of a culture combine their history with their modern needs in order to make use of their historical roots and to make sense of the changing world around them. This is the process we have utilized in our analysis of the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue-- Bill Long has used the liberal values of diachronic Oberlin history to make sense of his modern political world. The struggle has been applied to two kinds of time. First is the sacred time of the Rescue, where John Price is continually rescued by Oberlin humanists. This sacred diachronic time is then superimposed on modern synchronic time where Long teaches middle-school children about the works of Martin Luther King

with relevance to their sacred past. Because sacred and modern time are mixed in the legend, the latter gains importance. The modern conclusion is a lasting one because of its genetic evolution. The combination of sacred and modern time creates a new time, legendary time. Legend is a metaphor consisting of the sacred, transformed by the vehicle of the modern, to create a new, hybrid structure.

Legends like the Oberlin Wellington Rescue serve many-faceted functions that can be revealed through textual and contextual analysis. They serve both teller and audience. The interpretation changes with time. At first, the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue was associated with a legend of larger tradition, the life and teachings of Jesus. This connection helped to sustain the validity of the organization through its early stages of communitas. We can see this connection through Fletcher's historical account. Later, activists like Bill Long used the legend to unite Oberlin's blacks and whites during the sixties, a time of national unrest. Long used the Rescue legend to bring his culture through the Mccarthy days, and to help the Oberlin people understand their commitment to the values that were being preached by Martin Luther King Jr.

Long's version of the Rescue helps him to identify himself as a leader of the times, and an activist with a noble cause. By enhancing the role of Charles Langston, and creating a character who may represent himself in the tale,

Long placed himself within the context of the legend, thus becoming a symbol.

It should be clear, therefore, that in a literate society legend may be polymorphous: it is found in the classical form of the oral narrative, the written word presented as history, the dramatic form, and the material form. Legend in Oberlin seems to fulfill most of the functions outlined by Bascom (1965:298): as entertainment, as a teaching aid, as a model for group morality, and as a political organizer. But I diverge from Bascom in that I do not think that legend has to be considered true to continue functioning as legend. For some legends the audience practices "a willing suspension of disbelief;" this practice differs from the folktale in that folktales are always known to be false.

Legends like the Cassie Chadwick story resurface in times of need, depicting the origins of certain institutions such as the Oberlin Public Library. The Cassie Chadwick legend also shows that both the college and the town must share in their responsibility to the community by stressing that these potentially hostile institutions have a unified origin through common legend. Legends play a crucial role in the maintenance of small town values, binding the college and town through history to a relationship of obligation and reciprocity.

An example is the fact that Oberlin legends are used to

shield people from many forms of liminality: the college and the town, once synonymous, are now separate entities. When two communities coexist within limited boundaries, a peaceful balance must be maintained. Even though student/town-person contact is minimal, the Oberlin legends help to familiarize the "other." The legends camouflage the fission of the town people from the college students, while protecting members who fit into both groups from feelings of town/gown disloyalty. Long's version of the Rescue legend appeared at a time when the nation was split. The blacks had just begun to claim membership as full citizens which they had previously been denied. In this sense the black was a neophyte, an initiate. Long's revitalization of the Rescue legend superimposed the memory of an earlier time when blacks were gaining full membership in society. The legend drew parallels between pre-Civil War times and the present, and reminded Oberlinians of their earlier humane behavior. Thus legend became ritual and so enshrined Oberlin traditions, so that through repetition the liberal Oberlin way was established.

As my data appear to show, legend becomes a guide to group behavior. The scholarship of legend seems to need modernizing. The oral prerequisite for folklore cannot be viewed as compendious. A process oriented differentiation may be more useful, so that instead of looking at the form of the text to determine if folk literature is legend, the

anthropologist may examine function to see if the contextual framework denotes legend. An examination of the storyline in conjunction with the context will show the process of change that accompanies legend transformations.

While I do not believe that the Nat Brant version of the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue may be classified as legend, it may be the first step in the direction of creating a migratory Oberlin-Wellington Rescue legend that will in time be incorporated elsewhere. The legend may be tailored to suit a new environment. It will lose its local symbol much the way Trobriand Cricket barely resembles English Cricket. It would be interesting to trace the reception of Brant's book around the nation, and examine the permutations, recording the results.

Legend is not a fixed, immutable statement, but rather an emergent process stemming from symbol and context and tending toward an infinite and crescent history.

Introduction

The material used to present this dramatization of the history of the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue is contained in two books:

1. Jacob Shipherd: History of the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue
2. Robert Fletcher: History of Oberlin College

With the exception of various narrators, who have been labelled as waitresses. waiter, court clerks, etc., all the characters are historical. The toasts given at the Feast of Felons, and most of the dialogue in the trial scene are direct quotes from Mr. Shipherd's book. Other bits of information are direct quotes from Mr. Fletcher. In the trial scene, some of the words have been transferred from one historical character to another. The dialogue in Wack's saloon, in front of the hotel in Wellington, and elsewhere, is imaginary, but an honest attempt to portray how these people in the last century might have spoken.

This piece was written at the request of Oberlin Middle School teachers for the purpose of instruction in Oberlin history. Consequenly an effort was made to keep seventh and eighth grade students in mind, both as readers, and perhaps as actors in bringing the story to the stage.

Since I first read this story I have thought it contains all the material for a well written play bringing to the stage the conflict between obedience to the law of the land and to one's conscience. I still think so, and hope that this effort here will stimulate someone else to write such a drama.

Friends and sometimes critics of mine will recognize personal biases in some of the aside remarks made by various narrators.

Bill Long
July, 1979

Rescue: 9/13/58 1.00 - 2.00 p.m.
BETWEEN 5 and 6 in Wellington

Feast of Felons:
Version II

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Charles Langston	Age 41, single, a teacher
John Langston	Age 29, lawyer, Charles' brother
Mama Langston	Age 60, mother to Charles and John
Caroline Langston	Age 29, John's wife
Langston Children	Age 4 and 5, Caroline's children
Lewis Leary	Age ~~30~~ 24, freed black man
~~Grace~~ MARY Leary	Age ~~30~~ 24, Lewis' wife
Mother Leary	Age 60, Lewis' mother
John Copeland	Age ~~23~~ 25, student, Leary's nephew
Wilson Evans	Age 35, freed black man, cabinet and coffin maker
Ralph Plumb	Age 45, lawyer, politician
James Fitch	Age 30, Oberlin Bookseller
Simeon Bushnell	Age 30, Fitch's assistant
James Fairchild	Age 42, Oberlin College Professor
Henry Peck	Age 38, Oberlin College Professor
Asa Mahan	Age 60, Oberlin College President
Chauncy Wack	Saloon Keeper
Anderson Jennings	Slavecatcher
Jacob Lowe	Federal Marshall
Sam Davis	Kentucky Sheriff
John Price	Age 18, a runaway
Kagi	Age 35, John Brown's Lieutenant
Shakespeare Boynton	Age 13, young white boy
George Bliss	U.S. District Attorney, Prosecutor
Albert Riddle	Defense Attorney
Judge Willson	Judge at the Trial

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Continued)

2 Waiters at Feast of Felons

Assorted extras for the Rescue, Feast Scenes, and Rescue Celebration Scene

Black and White Woman at Rescue Scene

JAKE WHEELER

FEAST OF FELONS

SCENE 1

(Sometime during the spring of 1858 in Oberlin, Ohio, in the living room of John Langston. Also present Charles Langston, brother of John, Wilson Evans, Lewis Leary, Professor Fairchild, Professor Peck, Attorney Ralph Plumb, and Bookseller James Fitch.)

Plumb: I believe we are all here so we can begin. As you know, I've just returned from a meeting with the Republican Party leaders. They agree with us: someone from Oberlin should get the support of the Party as a candidate for Congress.

(Smiles and handshakes all around).

John L: Did they have anybody in particular in mind?

Plumb: No. They said we can pick our man.

Evans: What about you Ralph? You're the only politician here. Who do you think we should name?

Plumb: I already told them I'm not interested. I'm a newcomer around here you know. I think one of you should make the first suggestion and then we can talk about it.

B.L *

Fair: What about John?

Plumb: John, of course, is well known and well liked, but I raised the question of either John or Charles to see how they would respond to the idea of a ~~negro~~. black man.

Leary: What did they say?

Plumb: Surprised me. They liked the idea. Mr. Fremont was there and he said it was not too early for the Republicans to recruit free negroes to the Party.

Charles: He's probably thinking about all those black slaves who will get to vote someday.

Plumb: I know you're right Charles. But if we Republicans are ever going to destroy the slaveocracy, and you know that's a Democratic stronghold, we've got to think about the votes.

Charles: It's all right with me Ralph. I'd join hands with the Devil himself if I thought he could free the slaves. Right now I'm ready for the Republican Party. But I'm telling you this, if we help the Republican Party ~~we~~ get control of the White House and they turn their backs on the negroes the way the Whigs did in the Ohio Assembly then black men will turn their backs on the Republicans and seek elsewhere for help in ending slavery.

Plumb: If you're going into politics, Charles, you'll have to learn to speak more carefully.

Charles: Never. Politics for me is only a means to an end, freedom and justice for my people.

Plumb: I agree. But in politics a little compromise is called for now and then.

Peck: (Interrupting). Charles, are you saying you're willing to seek the office?

Charles: I'm ready to do almost anything to put an end to slavery, and to repeal the Fugitive Slave Act. The slavecatchers are now seizing free negroes and taking them back to slavery. Last Sabbath afternoon, a letter came to me from a gentleman in Saint Louis informing me that a young lady, who was formerly under my instruction in Columbus, a free person, is now lying in the jail at that place, claimed as the slave of some wretch who never saw her before. I could relate such instances by the hour, but you know all about it. The same thing ~~has been attempted~~ happened here in Oberlin. Yes. I will run for the office.

Leary: What do you think John?

John: Charles is your man, You know I've got two little ones at home and every-day that passes more free blacks are coming to me for LEGAL help. Also Charles has made many friends at the Anti Slavery Society meetings all over the district. And when he controls his temper he's much better at winning over people than I am.

Evans: John's right. I've heard Charles speak several times. He is a natural orator.

Leary: And he already is known to the college students, negro and white. I'm sure my nephew, John Copeland, can get them to help in a political campaign.

Fair: I venture a professor or two will also be ready to move from the halls of learning to the rough and tumble of politics. Be good for them.

(Knock on door. Bushnell enters).

John: (Opens the door.) Good evening Simeon, come in.

Bush: Evening everybody. I was just closing the Bookstore when a message came from Amos, down in Wellington. He's got another fugitive in his cellar he wants to send on to us. ~~tomorrow about noon~~. He says a slavecatcher has been hanging around the hotel down there. Amos thinks it best to keep the boy on the run.

Charles: If I live to be a hundred, I'll never understand these catchers. What makes them do it? Haven't they got any feelings for the oppressed?

Fitch: It's money, Charles, mostly money.

Evans: Not all of them, James, some of them actually believe it's a good thing they are doing, like Chauncy Wack, our esteemed saloon keeper.

Fitch: Wilson, are you sure that next door neighbor of yours doesn't know you are helping the runaways.

Evans: Wack will end up in one of my coffins some day, just like most folks in Oberlin. Forget about him. He's a believer in slavery all right, but he's more interested in selling whiskey.

Bush: I don't know. The catchers hang around his saloon whenever they come to town. My guess is, he spies on us, and especially you Wilson.

Evans: Maybe so. I ain't skeered of him. If he sets foot on my property I'll bash his head with a board.

Charles: Damn those slavecatchers to hell. All of them.

Peck: You don't mean that Charles.

A INSERT LINE BY FAIRCHILD ABOUT MAKING OBERLIN DRY,

Charles: I do mean it, and the same for every one of those Congressmen who voted for the Fugitive Slave Law. There's not a black man in the country who is safe now. Slave or free, any one of us could be snatched back to slavery.

Peck: Of course, you're right, Charles. But all is not lost. There are other Americans, white and black alike, who are working day and night to get that law overturned and to end slavery. In the long run we will prevail, because our cause is right. It's God's will that all men should be free.

Charles: I know what you are saying ~~Father~~ PROF. Peck, but I get so mad when I think of all my people who are denied their freedom and treated like animals, to be whipped and worked from early morning to late night while some lazy slave-owner sits on his porch sipping liquor and smoking tabacco. Why doesn't God put an end to it.

Peck: He will, Charles, rest assured, he will.

Charles: Maybe God needs more help from us. Maybe John Brown is right. Maybe he is God's instrument on earth to bring down slavery. Maybe we ought to join with him and take up arms. Leary here says he is ready to go and I'm thinking about it myself.

Fair: Be careful how you talk, Charles. We need people like you and your brother John for other kinds of work. Not only here, but throughout the country. It's young men like you who are especially prepared for such tasks.

Charles: I know all about that, professor. I attended your classes. But you don't know how I feel inside about slavery. There comes a time when a man has got to take a stand. There is nothing I won't do to help a slave to freedom.

Peck: (To Bushnell). Where are you planning to have this runaway stay after he gets here.

Bush: We could hide him in the basement of the bookstore.

Evans: I'll take him to my house.

Fair: Not this time, Wilson. Let me take him. We've got a room fixed up in the basement and he can stay there until we move him to Canada.

Evans: All right professor, but if you need help send one of your students to fetch me.

Plumb: That's settled then. Charles, are you able to go with me to Elyria tomorrow night? I'd like to introduce you to the Republican leaders who are meeting there.

Charles: Good. I'll go. And I'd like to make a short talk so they know what I believe before they settle on me for their candidate.

SCENE 2

TIME: SPRING, 1858

(The following are on stage as curtain opens: (1) Chauncy Wack, local saloon keeper, Democrat, friendly with slavecatchers, and Anderson Jennings, a slavecatcher who has been in and out of Oberlin on many occasions; (2) Charles Langston, Simeon Bushnell, Wilson Evans, and Oberlin College Professor Fairchild; (3) small group of black and white local citizens, college students, and school age children. All are standing around waiting for arrival of the Runaway. They talk among themselves, but conversation audible to the audience passes from one small group to the other).

Jennings: Quite a turnout of your fellow citizens just to welcome one runaway nigger.

Wack: They always come out on a day like this; makes them feel good. They call it doing the Lord's work.

Jennings: How many runaways you figure have passed through this village in the last five years?

Wack: Never kept count, but it's been plenty.

Jennings: A lot of them must have stayed, judging from all the niggers standing over there.

Wack: Most of what you see here are freed negroes. Most of the runaways have kept moving north to Canada.

Jennings: Well, if the one coming today is who I think he is he ain't going nowhere, specially if he stays here long enough for me to get him.

Wack: You on to sumpin?

Jennings: I'm not sure till I see this nigger we're waiting for. About three months ago neighbor friend of mine had three of his slaves sneak off one night; two males, one female. He made me his deputy to fetch em back and I've arranged for a U.S. Marshall to make it legal for me to take the niggers back home.

Wack: What makes you think the boy coming today is one of them?

Jennings: I tell you, Wack, I got a nose like a hound dog chasing a coon when I go after a nigger. I been in Wellington for a few days and I got a quick look at this nigger the day he arrived. That's why I'm here today, to make sure, and also to get a few drinks of your best stuff.

Bushnell: How are you getting along with the politicians?

Charles: Better than I thought. I believe these men are sincerely interested in abolishing slavery; but I also think they are as suspicious of me as I am of them.

Bushnell: What do you mean?

Charles: I'm not sure how far they're willing to go to accomplish the purpose. One of them suggested that I do a little less speechmaking at abolitionists meeting and spend more time at purely political meetings; another said it would be best if I toned down my language until after the nomination. A third said to be sure to keep out of trouble, whatever that means.

Bushnell: Think you can do it?

Charles: I told them I'd try. We'll see. Prof., is everything ready at your house for the runaway.

Fairchild: Yes, Charles, and the missus is busy now preparing a meal for the boy as soon as he gets here.

Bushnell: I see friend Wack is here. Who is the man with him?

Evans: Seems to me I've seen the likes of him in town before. But don't worry, I can take care of the two of them if they try anything.

Fairchild: I don't think that's likely. I hope nothing happens to interfere with the reception we've planned.

(Two students run on from off stage).

Student: Has he come yet?

Student: Where is he, in the Bookstore?

Bushnell: He's not here yet. But don't go away. Please wait and help give him a big welcome when he comes.

(People mill around, talking, inaudibly. Some children start up a game or two (follow the leader, Round the Mulberry Bush). Then another young student rushes in.

Student: He's here.

(John Price comes running on as if from fear of being caught. Crowd surrounds him, much yelling and talking. Jennings sneaks a close look; then Fairchild and Charles leave with the runaway. The crowd thins out until only Jennings and Wack are left).

Jennings: That's him; that's my nigger. I'd know him anywhere. Now listen Wack. You keep an eye on him, find out where he's going to stay. I'm going back south to get the necessary papers and a Federal Marshall to help me to capture him. I'm counting on you to be ready to help when the time comes.

SCENE 3

(SUMMER, 1958. Living room of John Langston home in Oberlin. Present: John Langston, Mama Langston, and Caroline Langston, John's wife).

John: What are you reading Mama?

Mama: It's a pamphlet about Harriet Tubman. What a woman!

John: You, too, Mama.

Mama: Thank you son, but I'm serious. Where she gets the energy to carry on her work is hard to understand. I had trouble enough just getting you and Charles to Oberlin, and I was carrying papers proving we were all freed negroes.

(At this point the two Langston children come rushing in to the room. They are ready for bed).

Child: Tell us a story, grandma. The one about the rabbit and the wolf.

Child: And talk like you talked when you were little.

Mama: De rabbitt is de slickest of all de animals de Lawd ever made. He ain't de biggest and he ain't de loudest but he sho am de slickest. If he gits in trouble he gits out by gittin somebody else in. Once he fell down a deep well. Did he holler and cry? No siree. He set up a mighty whistlin and a singin and when de wolf passes by he heard him and he stuck his head over de well and de rabbitt say: Git long way from here. Dere ain't room for two. Hit's might hot up there and nice and cool down here. Don't you git in dat bucket and come down here. Dat made de wolf all de more onrestless and he jumped into de bucket an as he went down de rabbitt come up, and as dey passed de rabbitt laughed and he say: Dis am life. Some go up and some go down.

Child: Now grandma, tell us one of the stories about how funny the white people act down on the plantation.

Mama: Lord, child, I know enough of such stories to keep you here all night. I'll tell you just one and then you got to go to bed. There was this one

white plantation owner who was the funniest of them all. Everything on his plantation had to be white. So he didn't have any slaves and wouldn't even let a negro on his land. He put white fences all around his place, painted all his trees white as far up as he could reach. He made certain that all his cattle, sheep, goats, hogs, mules, and horses were white. Anyone of his animals had a black calf or a black goat, whatever it was -- Mr. White gave it to the Negroes on his neighbor's farm. Even down to the chickens. He had all white chickens too. And when a chicken would hatch off some black chicks he'd say: Take those chickens off my land. Go find a slave and give it to him. I won't have no nigger chickens on my land.

Caroline: That's enough, Mama. Now you children run on to bed. (To John) Is Charles coming over tonight?

Mama: Of course he's coming. He probably stopped by to pick up ~~the~~ Learys.

Caroline: I hope MARY ~~Grace~~ comes, ~~too~~. I hear she's with child.

Mama: About three months. I wish Charles would find a good woman and have a child or two, or more.

John: I think he's counting on me to give you grandchildren while he spends his time at the abolitionists meetings.

Mama: I trust you mean that kindly son. Charles is doing good work, not only with the Society, but also at the freedom school where he and young Copeland spend so much of their time teaching the runaways to read and write. Everybody can't be a lawyer like you.

John: Now, Mama, don't forget you're the one that kept after me to go to College and then to study law.

Mama: Of course, I did, and you know how proud I am of you, and Caroline too, and the children. It was your father's last wish that you study law.

(Knock on door, Charles Langston, the two Learys, and John Copeland enter).

Charles: (Kisses her). Evening Mama.

Mama: How are you son? Did you make a good speech in Sandusky last night?

Charles: (Laughs). All my speeches are good Mama.

Mama: How many folks there?

Charles: Maybe 50. Copeland was with me and I believe his speech got more applause than mine. People there like to hear the college students talk.

Copeland: That's not right Mr. Langston, but thanks for saying it. Is John Brown's man here yet?

John: Any minute now. Wilson Evans was going to meet him out at the fork and bring him here.

Mama: Why is Mr. Brown sending his man to meet us?

John: I told you Mama. About six months ago I met Capt. Brown at Fred Douglas' house and he told me he had a new plan to free the slaves. He needs help from free black men up north. That must be what Kagi is coming here for.

Charles: Kagi?

John: Yes. That's Brown's Lieutenent. He's a former school teacher, who joined John Brown's cause in Kansas. Mr. Douglas told me we can trust him.

Mama: (To ~~Grace~~ MARY Leary). How you feeling child?

Grace: Fine, Miz Langston. But I'm worried about my man. He keeps talkin about wanting to go out on the road with Charles, or join up with John Brown.

Charles: (To Copeland). Lewis thinks he's a speechmaker.

Leary: We must all do our part somehow.

Copeland: That's right Unlce Lewis.

(Kagi and Wilson Evans enter. They greet all around).

Kagi: I have a note from Capt. Brown to Mr. John Langston.

John: I'm John Langston. (Takes note). This is Kagi, John Brown's trusted associate. We can talk freely.

Kagi: You'll excuse me, sir, if I proceed to the matter at hand. I must be off to Sandusky yet tonight.

John: Proceed, sir.

Kagi: Capt. Brown is ready to put his plan into effect for freeing the slaves. I am authorized to tell you only this: The plan involves gathering a large number of northern and Canadians negroes, along with any white people who are willing, in the mountains of Virginia. At the right moment we'll march first on the plantations in that state.

Charles: What will happen when the slaveowners resist?

Kagi: Capt. Brown will kill them.

Charles: And then what? Does he plan to continue the operation of the plantations?

Kagi: No sir. He plans to withdraw to the mountains with the black people and establish a new republic with a new constitution.

Charles: Doesn't he realize that the United States Army will pursue him even into the mountains?

Kagi: He plans on that but believes that once in the mountains the freed blacks will be able to defend their position.

Charles: Has he considered what all this will do to the efforts of those of us who have been rallying the white people of the north to the cause of abolition, what effect it will have on the anti slavery movement, ~~to~~ ON the new Republican Party?

Kagi: Capt. Brown says it is too late to settle the slave question by meetings, or petitions, or speechmaking, or politics, or any other peaceful means.

John: I must tell you I do not think the plan will work. What assurance does he have that the slaves will rise up? They are not used to arms or insurrections. This plan will scare them off.

Kagi: With all due respect sir, have you forgotten what happened in Santo Domingo? How the slaves revolted by the thousands? And in North Carolina where Denmark Vesey and his band marched on Charleston? And, even in Virginia where Nat Turner almost succeeded in overthrowing the slave masters?

And many more smaller uprisings which people in the north never hear about. When John Brown givesthe word the slaves, black freed men, and freedom loving white men will follow him to victory.

John: (Turning away). More likely to death.

Copeland: I'm not afraid to die. Could I die in a more noble cause? Could I die in a manner which would more induce true and honest men to honor me? And the angels more ready to receive me in their happy home above? Tell Capt. Brown I'll come when he sends the word. (To Leary) What about you Uncle?

Leary: God knows I want to do something for freedom. But there's Grace; and the child is on the way. I'll have to think about it. If I'm to go I must be sure that somebody will take care of my loved ones in case I don't return.

Copeland: (Looking at Charles) Mr. Langston?

Charles: I don't know. God knows I hate slavery more than anything in this world. For 20 years I've been doing my best with speeches and political organizing to build up opposition to the whole damn system. But maybe old Brown is right and the time has come to resort to arms. I'll have to think about it.

Copeland: (To Kagi) Tell your Capt., Oberlin will provide some men. There are others at the College that I will speak to. When the time comes we'll go with Capt. Brown.

Kagi: Thank you young man, and now (To Evans) if you'll point me on the road to Sandusky, I'll be on my way. Good night all.

John: Don't do it Charles, don't go. You'll ruin everything. The plan won't work. You could get killed. But even if Brown succeeds it will ruin forever any chance you may have to become the first black Republican elected to Congress.

Charles: Brother, you know that going to Congress is not as important to me as is the chance to strike a blow against the slaveowners. I believe the time may be here for some dramatic demonstration against the slaveowners. We've got to do more than make speeches, or go into politics. I've got to get more information about what it is John Brown intends to do if his plan does succeed. Then I'll decide what to do.

SCENE 4

(TIME: SEPTEMBER, 1858 - Chauncy Wack is behind the bar in his saloon on Main Street. Jennings, Marshall Lowe, Sheriff Davis enter).

Jennings: I tell you Lowe, every time I come to this damn village I wish I had never gotten into this slave catching business.

Lowe: Why? Oberlin looks the same to me as all those other towns we passed through on our way north.

Jennings: That's what you think. In most towns they complain a little when they see me and I start asking questions. But usually as soon as I show my warrant they let me take the blacks without any trouble.

Lowe: Well, that's what I'm here for. Surely these Oberlin people will respect the law in the person of a United States Marshall.

Davis: I wouldn't count on it. I've been here before myself and this place is different. Folks around here think they're doing the Lord's work when they help the runaways.

Lowe: Well, if they try interfering with me they'll learn that the Lord ain't as powerful as the United States Government. Don't they know about the Fugitive Salve Law and the penalties it imposes on those who break the law?

Wask: Oh, they know about it all right, probably better than you do. This is a college town, everybody's educated. But, the Republican professors have their own ideas about what laws to obey.

Lowe: (To Jennings) How you figuring to take this black?

Jennings: That's another thing. In most towns it's no problem at all to get help in trapping a runaway. A few dollars, or some whiskey, and it's all set. But not here. Well, what about it Wack? You got somebody?

Wack: I'm not sure. As soon as you start asking questions those damn college students get wind of it and then the game is up.

Davis: Look here jennings. You told me when we left Columbus we'd have no trouble. I'm not anxious to tangle with a mob of students. Maybe we ought to forget this nigger.

Jennings: No we don't. I paid you good money to come here with me and I ain't going back to Kentucky without that black. Damn it Wack, you must know somebody willing to do the job for a few dollars.

Wack: There is one you might get to help. But you'll be taking a chance. He's only a kid, and a sassy one too. Name is Shakespeare Boynton.

Jennings: A kid? How old?

Wack: 13. But he's big for his age. And you'll have to pay him big to help you catch John Price.

Jennings: How do I find this kid?

Wack: Right here. Said he'd be here some time this evening. Why don't you have another beer while you're waiting.

All: I'll take one. Me too. Fill it up.

(They all drink and talk while waiting for Shakespeare).

Lowe: How long you been in this slave catching game Jennings?

Jennings: I got into in right after the law was passed.

Lowe: Does your conscience ever bother you about dragging these poor miserable creatures back to slavery?

Davis: He ain't got no conscience. It's all a business with him, just as it is with the slave owners. A slave to them is just like a rake, or a hoe; something to get the work done.

Jennings: Ain't you forgetting that the blacks are an inferior race of people. It's right there, in the Bible.

Davis: That's what the preachers back home say, but sometimes I doubt it. I tell you honestly, if the Blacks ever get free and leave the south, the whole damn business system down there wouldn't last a year.

Jennings: Hey, you're beginning to sound like one of those damn northern nigger-lovers. What are you doing here with us anyway?

Davis: What else? For the money. It's always the money.

(Shakespeare Boynton enters).

Wack: Damn it boy, what took you so long?

S.B.: Had to milk the cows first.

Wack: You thought about what I asked you the other day?

S.B.: You mean about John?

Wack: Yes.

S.B.: If I'm gonna do it you'll have to pay me.

Davis: Spoken like a true blue southern gentleman.

Jennings: Come here, kid. Lemme take a good look at you.

(Jennings takes S.B. to one side and talks to him).

Now just how much money are you talking about?

S.B.: the price is twenty dollars.

Jennings: That's a lot of money for a little boy.

S.B.: I ain't so little that I don't know the price of a runaway.

Jennings: How do I know you're honest, that you won't take my money and not do the job. Do you go to church boy?

S.B.: Every Sunday. My old man makes me.

Jennings: That's good. I love little boys who go to church. And I can see that you're a smart one too. How's about we make a little deal? You like to make deals boy?

S.B.: What kind of a deal? Am I gonna get the money?

Jennings: Sure, boy, sure. You'll get the twenty -- if you can deliver the nigger to me.

S.B.: I can do it.

Jennings: How?

S.B.: We're diggin potatoes this week and John is always asking me for work. Used him once or twice before.

Jennings: So?

S.B.: After we finish the diggin I'll ask him if he wants to take a ride in my old man's buggy. I'll drive south on the Diagonal Road and you can wait for me a couple miles outside of town. It'll be easy to get him without anybody seeing you do it.

Jennings: When can you get him there?

S.B.: Soons I get my twenty dollars.

Jennings: Not so fast, little business partner. Here's ten. You'll get the other ten on the road when we get the black. Set it up for tomorrow afternoon. But no tricks, or I'll bust your pants. You got it?

S.B.: I got it. But if I don't get the other ten, I'll run over and tell the college students what's up. You got that? (He leaves).

Jennings: Let's get out of here. We've got a big day tomorrow.

(As they are leaving)

Hey, Wack, is it true that you and the Postmaster are the only two Democrats in Oberlin?

SCENE 5

(SETTING, FRONT OF BOOKSTORE - TWO MEN COME RUNNING ON STAGE).

1st Man: I'll go ring the alarm bell and then run over to tell more of the students. You go inside and tell Mr. Bushnell.

2nd Man: I'm going.

(The town bell starts ringing and then Bushnell comes from the bookstore with the 2nd man).

Bushnell: Are you sure it was John Price you saw in that buggy?

2nd Man: Yes sir. I know him well. I've been teaching him to read.

Bushnell: Run down to Mr. Langston's house and tell him. Then see if you can find the Evans brothers. Tell any other black folks you see to assemble here. I'll run down the street and get Mr. Plumb. We may need a lawyer to go with us to get John back.

(Both leave and then other people start to drift in, students, townspeople, Charles Langston, Bushnell reappears with Plumb).

Charles: What's the bell ringing for? Fire?

Bushnell: No. This young man and one other say they were returning from Wellington when they saw another buggy heading south with John Price and that slave-catcher Jennings with two other strangers.

Charles: What are we waiting for. Let's go get him.

Plumb: I don't think you ought to go Charles. There could be trouble and you're better not connected with it.

Charles: Are you saying you want me to stay here while these others go to help him.

Plumb: I think it best Charles. Bushnell and I can handle it.

Charles: For the sake of politics? Never. What are we waiting for. Let's go.

Bushnell: Quite everybody. There's no time to lose. These two young men saw the slavecatcher taking John Price south. They must be headed for Wellington to catch the late afternoon train for Columbus.

Charles: Let's go get John. We can talk later.

Bushnell: Langston's right. There's no time to lose. Some of you students go rouse the rest. Tell everybody you see to meet us in Wellington. We're going to get John back.

Charles: Let's go. Keep ringing that bell. Bring your guns.

(All leave as bell keeps ringing to an empty stage).

SCENE 6

(This scene is played in front of the hotel in Wellington. As it opens two women are seen sitting on a bench near the door. One is a well-dressed white woman with a hearing aid trumpet. The other is a poorly dressed black woman, a servant of the white. Off to one side Jake Wheeler, a Wellington resident is sitting, sleeping, in a chair by himself. Throughout the scene he never moves.)

White: Did you get any important news from your people when you were in Oberlin yesterday?

Black: No mam. (Aside). Next time I go I'm gonna stay.

White: What did you say?

Black: I said they're always talking about the runaways.

White: Aren't you glad most of them just pass through Wellington?

Black: (Lying) Well, I guess so mam.

White: Our town is much better without those students and ex-slaves.

Black: That's what you think.

White: What did you say?

Black: I said I wish I had a drink.

White: Later.

(The slavecatchers enter with John Price. They push past the women and go into the hotel).

You stay here. I'm going inside and see what this ia all about.

(Several citizens enter and talk with black woman. White woman comes out and sits down).

Black: Did you find out anything mam?

White: Of course I did. What do you think I went inside for? To get you a drink? (To the others) It's a Marshall and a Sheriff.

Black: How'd they catch him.

White: The Marshall said they had no trouble at all. Picked him up on Main Street.

Black: Oh, too bad.

White: What's that you say?

Black: I said I wish I had a seat pad.

White: Later, I'm glad they had no trouble. Those Oberlin people get pretty mad if a slavecatcher tries to get one of their adopted children. Well, they won't be here long. The train for Columbus is due within the hour. That runaway will be on the way south before anybody in Oberlin knows anything about it.

(Loud voice heard off stage. Oberlin crowd enters and gathers around the two women).

Voices: Where's John? We're here to get John.

Charles: (To White lady) Excuse me, mam, did you see some white men come by here with a young colored man?

(White lady shakes her head no, but Black lady points to the hotel door).

Bushnell: That's it. They've got him in the hotel.

Charles: Hold on John, we're coming.

Plumb: Don't go in Charles, leave it to the others. Bushnell will do it.

Charles: Let's go. I'm going.

(At this point the hotel door opens and Marshall Lowe and Jennings step in the doorway).

Lowe: Listen to me you people. We want no trouble here. I'm a United States Marshall armed with a warrant giving me the right to take this black boy to the Federal Court in Columbus. Jennings here can testify that he belongs to Mr. John Bacon in Kentucky.

Charles: He don't belong to anybody. He's a man, and one of our brothers. So turn him loose.

Bushnell: Right. Turn him loose. Columbus is too far south for us.

W.E.Evans: Give him to us or we'll bust down the door and take him.

Lowe: If you do you'll be breaking a federal law and you'll pay for it.

Charles: God's law is higher than slavecatcher's law. Enough talk. Let's get him.

(The Marshall and Jennings are pushed aside. Charles, Bushnell, Wilson Evans and others go inside. They come out with John, shouts and yelling as they all leave while Marshall and Jennings watch them go.)

(Scene ends with Jake Wheeler sitting alone on stage).

SCENE 7

There is no dialogue for this scene. It will have to be worked out depending on the availability of space and people. Essentially, however, it is a celebration by the citizens of Oberlin, hundreds of them, on the village square in the evening after the Rescue. Bell ringing, a bonfire perhaps, singing, all sorts of activity at the conclusion of which John Price leaves for Canada.

SCENE 8

(As the scene opens a number of people are seated at a long table facing the audience. They are eating and talking to each other but they cannot be heard. Two waiters, one male and one female, are there to serve them and also to make comments).

Male W: This is the afternoon of January 11, 1859. The people are here for a celebration before going to Cleveland to stand trial for breaking a federal law. One of them has called this event a Feast of Felons.

Female W: That's a fancy term for lawbreakers. Now they don't look like lawbreakers, do they? Take Mr. Fitch here. He owns the local bookstore, a strong family man, and a pillar in the church. He is also a member of the new Republican Party. His right hand man at the bookstore is Simeon Bushnell. Naturally, he's a Republican too.

Male W: These two are the Langston Brothers. John here is a lawyer and as good a one as you can find. Charles here spends his time making speeches and teaching uneducated negroes. Between them sits Prof. Peck who teaches moral and mental philosophy at the college. That's one class I didn't take.

Female W: Here's another pair of brothers: Wilson and Henry Evans. Wilson lives next door to old Chauncy Wack who some folks believe is a spy for the slavecatchers. Wilson is also the local coffin maker, and on more than one occasion he has smuggled a runaway out of town in one of his coffins.

Male W: Here is Asa Mahan, president of the College, sitting next to Moses Quinn. He was rescued from a slavecatcher years ago and chose to remain in Oberlin. Think of it. Blacks and whites sitting at the same table for a feast. Not many places in this country where that sort of thing goes on. I wonder how its going to be a hundred years from now.

Female W: Anyway, like I said before, they are lawbreakers, 21 to be exact. They broke the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 and they are going to stand trial for that crime in Cleveland.

Male W: (Reading from a book) This is the law: When a person held in service in any state of the United States shall escape into another state the person to whom such service is due, or his agent or attorney, may pursue and reclaim such fugitive, either by procuring a warrant from one of the Courts, or by seizing and arresting such fugitive, and by taking such fugitive before a Court whose duty it shall be to determine the case of the claimant.

Female W: Now that's legal talk. He speaks like that because he's a student at the College. Me, I'm just a waitress at Chauncy Wack's saloon, so I'll talk plain: What it means is that a slaveowner has got the right to go after a runaway slave and bring him back to slavery. If the Congress of the United States had used plain words like that maybe these Oberlin folks wouldn't be in trouble now. Could be they didn't understand the law seeing as how they talk more about Higher Law than about legal law. Anyway they didn't obey the law. Now they didn't say "to hell with it." That kind of talk doesn't go in Oberlin, except in my boss' saloon. What these folks did do was to organize an Underground Railroad which they used to help runaway slaves get to freedom in Canada.

Male W: Furthermore: "Any person who shall knowingly and willingly obstruct such claimant, or his agent, from arresting such fugitive, or shall rescue, or attempt to rescue such fugitive from service, or shall aid such fugitive to escape from his claimant, or shall harbor and conceal such fugitive to prevent his arrest and discovery, shall, for either offense, be subject to a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars, and imprisonment not exceeding six months.

Female W: More legal talk. What it means is this: if you help a runaway and get caught at it the Court will take your money and put you in jail. Why all these college people didn't get it straight is a mystery to me. Nobody knows how many times these folks broke the law; but it was plenty, and they usually got away with it. But last year they went too far. They used

force to interfere with a federal officer who was doing his duty. And they're going to pay for doing it. Mr. Wack says nobody can break a United States law even if they are God fearing Republicans. He also says that when that Democratic judge in Cleveland gets through with them it will probably be a hundred years before so many Republicans get together to break the law of the land again.

(Ralph Plumb, chairman of the meeting for the Feast rises, signals for silence, and speaks):

Plumb: Ladies and Gentlemen, and Felons all. I trust you will agree that we have indeed had a feast, for which I ask you to join with me in expressing our thanks to the wonderful ladies who have prepared it for us.

(Applause by all).

We are gathered here today to reaffirm our hatred and opposition to the Fugitive Slave Act and to the continuation of the enslavement of millions of our fellow human beings. We are here to demonstrate to our 21 Oberlin Felons that we are proud of the action they took when they released John Price from the hands of slavecatchers and ~~they~~ then sent him on to freedom in Canada. We are here to show our support to those who must stand trial for this action in the Federal Court in Cleveland. Join with me then and listen to a few remarks from those we now choose to call the Saints of Oberlin. Our first speaker will be Simeon Bushnell, who, with Charles Langston, led the Rescuers to Wellington to free John Price.

Bushnell: Our position is a proud one. To be charged with the crime of loving liberty too well enrolls our names with that immortal band of patriots who gave us the Declaration of Independence. Let no one accept the maxim: Our country right or wrong. Such was not the doctrine of our noble fathers. Hold instead that our labor and our blood are due our country when she needs them for the honor and good of the Commonwealth. So we are not traitors but truest liege men when we declare we will obey no law in which impiety is flaunted in the face of heaven.

Prof.Peck: I have spent my entire life teaching young men and women to express goodwill toward all men. That is God's wish for all of us. It is also the best bond of society, the surest support of government, and it is never more fully developed than when it is at the call of the weak and oppressed against the tyranny of the rulers. Goodwill is also forebearing, but there is a point at which forebearance ceases to be a virtue. When that point is reached: LET THE TYRANNT PERISH!!

Wilson Evans: The laws of this country say that I have no rights because I am a Black man. They say that some white devil has the right to make me a slave and even if I work my way to freedom, which I did, that same devil can snatch me back to slavery. I say this. My grandmother did not ask to come to this land. She was dragged from her home in Africa and sold like a hog, or a dog. But she taught my mother and my mother taught me we were as good as any white people and that we had to struggle to get ourselves free and then to help free any other of our people that we could. I'm proud of the part I took in the Rescue and stand here now to say that I would do it again because I respect freedom and love for my people more than I will ever respect or obey a law of a government of slaveholders.

Asa Mahan: My words will be short, since I was not one of the Rescuers. But I wish to say my heart is with you as you face the trail in Cleveland. I rejoice that some of the young people I have taught in years past are still true to the principles of liberty. Now, as President of the College, I say to you: Be firm; hold firm. Do not recant. God goes with you.

John Lang: Honor to those who are prepared to make personal sacrifices. Support those who work hard at being a true American citizen. Reinstate the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. American slavery has stricken down the first; the Fugitive Slave Act the second. Shall we meet the duty of a true American citizen? To do so we must all prepare to make sacrifices, to go to prison if necessary.

R.Plumb: My friends, I wish to make a few remarks of my own before calling on our last speaker, who, because of his dedication to and work for the end of slavery, should have the last word at this Feast. I want to say our country needs deliverance from the galling ~~toke~~ Yoke of the slave power. A second Jefferson must soon appear of such qualities of head and heart as shall enable him to take care of the ship of state, one who will secure to the States their sovereign rights, to the people the enjoyment of liberty, and who will keep the Federal Government and the Federal Courts clearly within the limits prescribed by the Constitution. And now, Mr. Charles Langston.

Charles: Death to the Fugitive Slave Act. Hate it while you live. Bequeath your hatred to those who come after. Let not its commands bind us. Refuse forever obedience to its unrighteous behests. But, some will say, that is Treason. But I say this: step by step the slave power is driving us on, forced to take one or the other horns of the delimma: either to be false to Humanity or traitors to the government. If we would ordain and establish Justice and maintain the Constitution not only in its essential spirit, but in letter, we are forced into resistance to the government. I am glad we are being brought before a federal court because we snatched John Price from the hands of a Federal Marshall. I am sure my fellow Felons are also glad. For in that Court we will have the opportunity to spread our views not only to those who already agree with us, but to the world at large. It is not only the Oberlin Felons who will be on trial in Cleveland. The slave power government of the United States will also be on trial. On to Cleveland! Death to the Fugitive Slave Act! Death to slavery.

(Much cheering. The dinner breaks up and the people wander out, except Plumb, Charles Langston, Bushnell, Leary, and Copeland).

Copeland: That was an excellent speech Mr. Langston. I've never heard you do better.

Charles: Thank you, John. Is there anything new from John Brown?

Copeland: Just one small thing. I had word from Kagi that Shields Green, who used to be in Oberlin, has agreed to join Mr. Brown. Have you decided what to do yet?

Charles: I'm thinking about it. But for now I'm concentrating on the upcoming Trial and how we can use it to our best advantage. I'll keep in touch with you about my thoughts.

Copeland: Yes sir. (Copeland and Leary leave).

Plumb: I want to speak to you about the trial, Charles. I've made contact with some lawyer friends in Cleveland and they think it is possible for you to be removed from the trial, if you're willing to cooperate.

Charles: What are you talking about?

Plumb: Well, in spite of your arrest the Republicans still want you to run for Congress, but they insist that to do so you must not stand trial. For if you do whether the verdict is guilty or innocent the effect politically will be the same. You cannot run.

Charles: (Indignant) How can you ask me to do this? I told you at the very beginning I put freedom for my people above politics or election to Congress. How would I look if by some political trick I was relieved from standing trial? You know, the Federal Marshall and the slavecatcher know that Bushnell and I organized the Rescue and that he and I were the ones who took John Price from the hands of the Marshall. No, I'll never do what you ask. I'm ready and eager to stand trial for what I did and I wish to hear no more of this from you or anyone else.

COURT SCENE 9

(As the scene opens all the participants, except the Judge are in place. He walks on, raps the gavel and speaks).

Judge: Is the Prosecution ready to proceed?

Pros.: We are your Honor.

Judge: Is the Defense ready?

Defense: Yes your Honor.

Judge: (To Pros.) Call your first witness.

Pros: We call Mr. John Bacon. (As your Honor knows we have sworn in all the witnesses previously.) State your name and address.

Bacon: My name is John Bacon and my address is Macon County, Kentucky.

Pros.: Are you acquainted with a slave by the name of John Price?

Bacon: I am, sir.

Pros.: Please describe him.

Bacon: He is 18 years old, about five feet eight inches high, copper color, and heavy built. He weights about 160 pounds.

Pros.: Do you consider John price your property?

Bacon: Yes sir. At the time of his escape he owed service to my father. His mother was my father's property. Both the mother and the boy now belong to me -- bone and flesh.

Pros.: Thank you, Mr. Bacon. That is all. (To Defense) Your witness.

Defense: No questions.

Judge: Call your next witness.

Pros.: Mr. Anderson Jennings. (Jennings takes the stand) State your name and address please.

Jennings: My name is Anderson Jennings, and I'm next door neighbor to Mr. John Bacon of Macon County, Kentucky.

Pros.: I understand that you are the one who first saw John Price in Oberlin.

Jennings: Yes sir, that's right. And I recognized him right away as the property of John Bacon.

Pros.: How could you be so sure he was Bacon's slave?

Jennings: By his color. Seed him many times on Bacon's farm. You see down home we have different names for different colored blacks. Some we call yaller; some black, and some copper color. Yaller is part white and part black blood, usually half and half. Copper color is between black and mulatto. Black is black -- pure African. Bacon calls John Price copper color, but I call him black. But he's Bacon's all right. Least he was until he ran away and came to Oberlin.

Pros.: Did Mr. Bacon agree to pay you any money for your help in capturing John Price?

Jennings: That's a damn lie spread by these northerners. I did what I did out of pure neighborly regard for another man's property.

Pros.: One further question: How come you can be so sure that John Price was the slave of Bacon?

Jennings: Well, he's a boy, ain't he? Down where I come from, all black males are boys as well as slaves -- until they become Uncles.

Pros.: Did you, or the other men, ever consider you were doing wrong when you captured John Price?

Jennings: Wrong? No sir. We had the law on our side and a United States Marshall with us. Anyway, we were doing the black boy a favor. Blacks are much better off down south than up north. And John's a good one. Me and the others were eating dinner with him while we were waiting for the train. But I want the record to show that was the first time in my life I ever did that.

Pros.: Thank you. Your witness. (To the Defense).

Defense: No questions.

Pros.: Jacob Lowe. (Lowe takes the witness stand) State your name and occupation.

Lowe: My name is Jacob Lowe, and I'm a duly appointed United States Marshall.

Pros.: Are you acquainted with a man by the name of Anderson Jennings?

Lowe: Yes sir.

Pros.: In what capacity?

Lowe: Jennings showed me a power of attorney he had from John Bacon and papers signed by Judge Chittenden authorizing me to come with him to Oberlin to capture Bacon's black boy. He coulda done it himself but maybe he was a little scared of them Oberlin folks.

Pros.: Well, did you ever capture the slave?

Lowe: We had him all right and got as far as Wellington on the way home. But then that mob showed up and demanded we give him back. We showed our power of attorney and our papers. We invited them to go with us to Columbus and see that the black had a fair trial. We promised if we didn't prove all we said then we'd let them fetch him back. They said that was a little too far south. Then they busted in the door and snatched him, and that's the last time I ever saw him. Some says he is now in Canada, but I ain't going there to get him.

Pros.: Did you recognize any of the pepple who busted in the door and snatched John Price.

Lowe: Yes, I sure did.

Pros.: Do you see any of them in this courtroom.

Lowe: Yes, I do.

Pros.: Would you please point the person out you saw.

Lowe.: (Point to Charles) Him.

Pros.: Are you sure.

Lowe.: I'll never forget him and two others. One was a white man and he was the same one who drove the buckboard that took Price away. The other was another black who rushed me like a black bull charging after a cow in heat.

Lowe.: (Con't) I'd say those three were the leaders of the Rescue.

Pros.: Thank you. (To the Defense) Your witness.

Defense: No questions.

Pros.: Jake Wheeler. Mr. Wheeler I understand you are a resident of Wellington, and that you were in front of the hotel in Wellington on the 13th of September last when a large crowd of people gathered.

Wheeler: That's right. I always sun myself in front of the hotel.

Pros.: Please describe what you saw.

Wheeler: Well, I couldn't tell how many were there. Might be 400. A good many had guns. I heard the Marshall tell the crowd he had a right to arrest John Price, but they just yelled at him. Some of what I would call the lower orders, and some that I thought a little intoxicated, made some pretty harsh statements. I mean they cussed and said they'd have the black, law or no law.

Pros.: Anything else?

Wheeler: Then some of the crowd got a ladder and went in through a window. Then more busted in the front door. Next thing I seed the black being passed over the heads of the crowd and put in a wagon. Then the wagon took off for Oberlin.

Pros.: Your witness. (To the Defense).

Defense: No questions.

Pros.: The prosecution rests, your Honor, but I must say I am surprised that the Defense did not choose to cross examine any of our witnesses.

Judge: The defense may now state its case.

Defense: Your Honor, we did not choose to question those witnesses because we believe what they said is immaterial to our defense. First, these southern gentlemen were not engaged in a lawful activity. They are better labled as kidnappers, and we request that the Court order all of them arrested on that charge.

Judge: Request denied. Continue.

Defense: Second, and most important. It is our intention to argue that the Fugitive Slave Act is contrary to the Constitution of the United States and therefore not binding on any of its citizens.

Judge: I am sure you are aware that the Supreme Court has already ruled it constitutional.

Defense: Third, it is our contention that there is a Higher Law than the law of the United States. That is God's law concerning right and wrong. And all men must obey God first and man second.

Bliss: Your Honor, if I may. I would like to respond to the statements just made by the Defense. This case excites interest because it is the first attempt to enforce the Fugitive Slave Act. Under that law the master has a right to follow and capture his slave. Those Oberlin people who came to the rescue of John Price knew he was a slave, knew he was a fugitive.

Riddle: The important point is this: When the Constitution of the United States was adopted, the sentiment of the people was decidely against slavery and tolerated it only as a temporary evil which must soon be done away. President Jefferson, in his first message to Congress said: "All laws, in order to be respected by the governed, must be just, must be founded on the principles of Eternal Justice." And what is Eternal Justice except the Higher Law, God's Law, if you will.

Bliss: The Jury will be compelled to find that the crowd went to Wellington in defiance of the law. People around Oberlin think so little of their government when it interferes with their sympathies they consider the violation a good joke. Is it right that any people should violate the law of the land, knowing no law but their own conscience?

Riddle: It is true that Oberlin's people are champions of the Negro race. But it is because they recognize the right of the Creator to fashion his creatures as seems good, without making diversity a pretext to abuse them. And they

Riddle: (Cont.) believe that in God's eyes and in the eyes of the founding fathers who wrote the Declaration of Independence: All men are equal.

Bliss: Their purpose, fixed and determined, was to violate the law of the land. Students who attend Oberlin College are taught sedition and treason along with science and literature. They graduate from that intitution to go forth and practice treason.

Riddle: It is not true that Oberlin, her professors, students, and people are disciplined and armed hordes turning the College into a fortress against the government and all the laws of the Country.

Bliss: No? Why then did such a crowd of Oberlinians go to Wellington? They had turned out well, for that old buzzard's nest of Oberlin, where the negroes who arrive over the Underground Railroad are regarded as dear children, that nest had been broken into, and one of the brood had been taken.

Riddle: Is there any decent man or woman in this Court Room who would not do the same if one of his children, or a dear friend, were snatched from his nest, to be returned to slavery, and treated as a thing of another man?

Bliss: Those Oberlin men, who had been taught to defy the laws of the United States, rushed off to rescue the boy who had been taken. That was no delegation of Christians walking to a prayer meeting. That was an army that old General Satan himself might have selected from the chief spirits of hell.

Riddle: Oh, if I could live to see that day when a slave could set his foot upon our soil and feel his shackles fall forever from his galled and bleeding limbs! Then I could say with all my heart: Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord."

Bliss: There is no need of a Higher Law. There is no need of the Children of God rallying in the shape of a riot. The children of this world are adequate

Bliss: (Cont) for such duty. When those Oberlin men went down to Wellington they proclaimed they did so under the Higher Law, for they know they were outraging the Law of the Land.

Riddle: As to the so called dogma of the Higher Law. I boldly proclaim that he who has no higher regard for the right than that which is enforced by the penal code of the country is neither a good citizen or an honest man. Right existed before the feeble enactments of man and remains unchanged by acts of Congress.

Bliss: Are we in a dream? Are we in a court of Justice? Or, are we at a political rally? Here are the saints of Oberlin: Peck, Plumb, Fitch, to which are now added sub-saints Bushnell and Langston -- all saints of the Higher Law. But their Higher Law, as they interpret it, is that law which makes every man's conscience the law. Such a doctrine makes chaos. And until all men have the same conscience, the same control of passions, don't talk of Higher Law as God's Law. It is Devil's Law and would make a Hell on earth.

Riddle: I know this case is to be judged by none of the principles of Higher Law. I know that the Fugitive Slave Act is the law of the land. But I know it will never be accepted by our people as the final law. So I appeal to you, and the jury, to protect the interests of all living things and to vindicate the dignity of our glorious Commonwealth. Declare this defendant not guilty; release him, and the resulting effect may be not only to have Congress repeal the Fugitive Slave Act, but will stir the hearts and minds of our legislators and our people to abolish slavery in the United States forever.

Bliss: First, on the question of the Higher Law. When Christ came, many were in bondage, and not a word was said about it. Christ denounced idolatry; he denounced polygamy; but not a word against slavery. Nor did he tell his followers to break the law of the land. No. He said render unto Ceaser that which is Ceasers and unto God that which is God's.

Bliss: (Cont) Today, Ceaser is the United States government and that government has made the Fugitive Slave Act the law of the land. The Defense does not question that. He admits it. He does not question that Charles Langston violated the law. He admits it. Langston interferred with a United States Marshall in pursuit of his duty; he used force to take another man's property from that Marshall and then sent that slave to freedom. For that he must be pronounced guilty and punished according to the law of the land.

Judge: Gentlemen of the Jury, you have heard testimony from witnesses and statements from both the Prosecution and the Defense. It is now your duty to retire from the courtroom and to return with a verdict of guilty or not guilty.

(Judge stands up and leaves. Others relax. Then John Copeland comes on stage, approaches Langston and they move to one side where Leary and Kagi await them.)

Copeland: Mr. Langston, Kagi has a message for you from John Brown.

Charles: Yes.

Kagi: Captain Brown is very near to putting his Plan into effect. We have been very successful in recruiting others to our cause and expect to have more than enough men for the initial action we are going to take.

Charles: Just what is that action?

Kagi: I'm sorry, sir, I cannot tell you that now. But, Capt. Brown is certain his plan will work. He has sent me here to tell you that he does not want you to come when Copeland and Leary do. He has plans and needs a man like you to help after the slaves follow him to the mountains.

Leary: That's right, Charles, and I'm glad Brown feels that way. My mind is made up. I'm going with Copeland here, but I want you to promise me that if anything goes wrong and I don't come back, I want you to take care of Grace and the child.

Charles: Of course, you know I'd do that in any case. But when is Brown going to make the first move. When will you be leaving Oberlin?

Leary: We don't know, but whenever, I'm going.

(Clerk of Court calls Court back in session) Judge and jury come back in).

Judge: Has the jury reached its verdict?

Foreman: It has your Honor.

Judge: What is it?

Foreman: Guilty.

Judge: Mr. Langston. Please rise. It is at all times a painful duty to pronounce sentence and impose penalties which the law demands for violations. The discharge of this duty is particularly painful in dealing with the class of offenders to which you belong, who deem it a virtue to violate the law and then seek the penalties with exhultation and defiance. Men of your intelligence must know that the enjoyment of a rational liberty ceases the moment the laws are allowed to be broken with inpunity, when the standard of right is placed above and against the laws of the land.

Charles: I know all about your processes of law, and I know that the Courts of this country are so constituted as to oppress and outrage colored men. There is not a spot in this country, not even on the altars of God, nor in the old Philadelphia Hall, where any colored man may dare ask the mercy of a white man. Let me stand in that Hall and tell a U.S. Marshall that my father

Charles: (Cont.) was a Revolutionary War hero, that he served under Lafayette, and fought the whole war, and that he told me he fought for my freedom as much as for his own, and that Marshall could sneer at me and clutch me with his bloody fingers, and say he has a RIGHT to take me back to slavery.

Judge: Congressional legislation often becomes distasteful to a portion of the people. Yet ours is a representative government where the people themselves control the legislation. It is indispensable to good order and the well being of society that acts of Congress should command obedience. It is enough to know that the law alleged to be broken is the law of the land. Have you anything further to say, sir?

Charles: I am for the first time in my life before a Court of Justice, charged with the violation of law, and now about to be sentenced. I cannot, of course, and do not expect that anything which I may say will in any way change your predetermined line of action.

The law under which I am arraigned is an unjust one, one made to crush the colored man, and one that outrages every feeling of humanity, as well as every rule of right. I have nothing to do with its constitutionality, and about it I care a great deal less.

The colored man is oppressed by certain universal and deeply felt prejudices. These jurors are well known to have largely shared these prejudices, and I, therefore, consider that they were neither impartial, nor were they a jury of my peers. I was tried before a jury that was prejudiced; before a Court that was prejudiced; prosecuted by an officer who was prejudiced. Therefore, I urge by all that is good and great in manhood, that I should not be subjected to the pains and penalties of this oppressive law when I have not been tried, either by a jury of my peers, or a jury that were impartial.

Charles: (Cont.) I went to Wellington knowing that colored men have no rights in the United States which white men are bound to respect; that the Courts had so decided, that Congress had so enacted, that the people had so decreed. And when I appeal to Congress they say a Federal Marshall has a right to make me a slave; when I appeal to the people they say he has a right to make me a slave; and when I appeal to your Honor, your Honor says he has a right to make me a slave. And if any man, white or black, seeks an investigation of that claim, such men also make themselves amenable to the pains and penalties of the Fugitive Slave Act. For black men have no rights which white men are bound to respect.

In going to Wellington I knew that if John Price was taken to Columbus he was hopelessly gone, whether he had ever been in slavery or not. I also know that I was in the same situation myself and that if any man should seize me and claim me as his slave that I, by the perjury of a solitary wretch, would, by another provision of the Fugitive Slave Act, be helplessly doomed to life long bondage. So in view of all these facts I say, that if ever again a man is seized near me, and is about to be carried south as a slave, before any investigation had been made, and if it is adjudged illegal to procure such an investigation, then we are thrown back upon those last defenses of our rights, which cannot be taken from us, and which God gave us that we need not be slaves.

I ask your Honor while I say this, to place yourself in my situation, and you will say with me that if your brother, if your friend, if your wife, if your child had been seized by men who claimed them as fugitives, and the law of the land forbade you to seek an investigation, and precluded the possibility of any legal protection, or redress--then you will say with me that you would not only demand the protection of the law, but you would call in your neighbors and your friends, and would ask them to say with you that these your family and friends could not be taken into slavery.

Charles: (Cont.) So I stand here to say that if for doing what I did on that day in Wellington I am to go to jail, and pay a fine of a thousand dollars, according to the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Act, and such is the protection of the laws of this country afford me, I must take upon myself the responsibility of self protection; and when I come to be claimed by some perjured wretch as his slave, I shall never be taken into slavery. And in that trying hour, as I would have others do for me, I would call upon my friends to help me and I will do all I can for any man thus seized and held.

So you may do your worse. Fine me. Send me to jail if you will. And when I get out, I will rescue the first slave I get a chance to rescue. I have sworn eternal enmity to this law. I mean to defy it, to trample on it. I have never for one moment regretted the part I played in the Rescue. For we did our duty. We did right.

Judge You have had your chance to speak and I am constrained to say that the penalty in your case should be comparatively light. It is the sentence of the Court that you pay a fine of one hundred dollars, and that you be confined in the jail at Cuyahoga County for a period of twenty days.

(Court if adjourned.)

FINAL SCENE 10

Participants: Mama Langston, Lewis Leary's mother, Charles and wife, John and wife, Wilson Evans and wife. Charles speaks as group enters living room of John Langston house after eating farewell dinner.

Charles: Mama, I do believe that was the best dinner you ever cooked.

Mama: Thank you, son. Now if you and Grace would just change your minds and stay in Oberlin instead of running off to Kansas I would be happy to keep you well fed for the rest of your days.

Charles: Now Mama, you know we settled that weeks ago.

Mama: You settled it. I didn't. I worry about you and the family going out west where all that killing is going on.

Charles: I've got to go, Mama, I've got to go.

Mrs.Leary: Charles, you ain't doing this just because of what happened to my son at Harper's Ferry, are you?

Charles: That's part of it, mother Leary. I should have gone with him and young Copeland. They did the right thing when they joined Captain Brown. They paid with their lives. The least I can do is carry on their work in Kansas.

Mrs.Leary: What about the baby? That's my grandson you know. Maybe you ought to leave him with me until you and Grace settle down in Kansas.

MARY
~~Grace:~~ We can't do that mother Leary. Charles and I have talked about that but we want the baby to be with us.

Charles: That's right. The child must go with us. I promised Lewis that I would take care of Grace and the baby if anything happened to him and I will. We're going to make sure when he grows up that he never forgets the sacrifice his father made for the cause of freedom.

John: Brother, are you sure you're not going west just because your conviction at the Trial made you ineligible to run for Congress? You know that's going to follow you wherever you go. Why not listen to Mama and wait a bit before leaving?

Charles: No. I've got to go. Now. I wouldn't have lasted too long with those politicians anyway. There's too much compromise needed. I've had enough of that. I've got to go. I should have gone to Harper's Ferry. I didn't. The least I can do now is join all the others who have left Oberlin to fight against slavery in Kansas.

Evans: Charles, there's still plenty of work to do in Oberlin and the rest of Ohio. You are still our best spokesman, the best qualified man we have to organize folks here against slavery.

Charles: That may be true, Wilson, but I tell you, it's not for me. I've got to go. I feel driven to get to the front lines in the battle for freedom. And that's Kansas. If the slaveocracy gets control of Kansas they won't stop until they impose slavery on the whole country. The fight is out there. You all know it. Have you forgotten? We all signed the statement of the Kansas Emigration Society way back in 1854. I've read it so many times at meetings I know it by heart: "Let slavery triumph now and the fate of this nation will be sealed, but let the fair land of Kansas ~~land~~ be rescued from the threats and domination of slavery and it will plume afresh the drooping wing of freedom and inspire a rational hope that, having vanquished the slave power once, the north will be filled with a life that shall work out the complete redemption of our government and enfranchisement of the oppressed millions of our land."

Were those empty words? Or did we mean it?

Mama: Son, I'm proud of you for what you want to do. But I'm also scared for you, and Grace, and the baby. It's not too late for you to change your mind and work for freedom here.

Charles: It is too late, Mama. I've got to go. There's twenty other people waiting for us now at the Depot. You know I love you and I like to be near you, but I've got to go. You know what's going on out in Kansas -- the same thing that went on in Oberlin for weeks before the slavecatchers seized John Price. Kidnappers, negro stealers, slavecatchers, hidden and sulking about, waiting some opportunity to get their bloody hands on some helpless creature to drag him back -- or for the first time -- into life long bondage. Old men, women, and innocent children become alarmed for their safety. It was not uncommon to hear mothers say they dare not send their children to school for fear they would be caught up and carried off. Some of these people had become free by long and patient toil at night, after working the long day for cruel masters, and thus at last getting enough money to buy their freedom; others had become free by the good will of their masters; and there were others who had become free -- to their everlasting honor I say it -- by the exercise of their own God given powers, by escaping from the plantations, eluding blood thirsty patrols, outrunning blood hounds, swimming rivers, fording swamps, reaching at last what they supposed to be free soil; and then to become prey for slavecatchers, armed with warrants. All this, I say, went on in Oberlin. We all saw it. And now the same thing is happening in Kansas. I've got to go Mama, I love you. But I've got to go.

(Kisses Mama, hugs John, shakes Wilson, takes Grace by the hand).

Bibliography

Abraham, Karl
1955 Dreams and Myths: A Study in Folk-Psychology. Classical Papers and Essays on Psycho-Analysis, Vol. II. 151-209.

Anderson, George K.
1965 The Legend of the Wandering Jew. Providence, Rhode Island: Brown University Press.

Baker, Ronald L.
1972 The Role of Folk Legends in Place-Name Research. Journal of American Folklore. 85:367-73.

Ballantine, W.G.
1883 The Oberlin Jubilee. Oberlin, Ohio: E.J. Goodrich.

Barnard, John
1969 From Evangelicalism to Progressivism at Oberlin College, 1866-1917. Ohio: Ohio State University Press.

Barths, Roland
1972 Mythologies. New York: Hill and Wang.

Barre, W. La.
1948 Folklore and Psychology. Journal of American Folklore. 61:388.

Bascom, William
1943 The Relationship of Youruba Folklore to Divining. Journal of American Folklore. 56:129.

1954 Four Functions of Folklore. Journal of American Folklore 67:333-49.

1965a Folklore and Anthropology. The Study of Folklore. New Jersey: Prentice Hall p. 25-33.

1965b The Forms of Folklore: Prose Narratives. Journal of American Folklore. 78:3-20.

Bauman, Richard
1986 Story, Performance, and Event: Contextual Studies of Oral Narrative. London: Cambridge University Press.

Bauman, Roland
1988 Introduction for Speaker Nat Brant. Oberlin

College. Unpublished.

Beckwith, M.W.
1931 Folklore in America Its Scope and Method. Publication of the Folklore Foundation. No.11. Poughkeepsie, New York.

Ben-Amos, Dan and Kenneth S. Goldstein (eds.)
1975 Folklore: Performance and Communication. Paris: Mouton.

Benedict, Ruth
1935 Zuni Mythology. 2 vols. Columbia University Contributors to Anthropology. 21:1

Bettelheim, Bruno
1977 The Use of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales. New York: Vintage Books.

Bigglestone, W.E.
1974 The Life and Death of 'Junior Ex'. Alumnae Magazine. 70: 7-10+15.

Blodgett, Geoffrey
1985 Oberlin Architecture, College and Town. Oberlin College: Published by Oberlin College.

1972 Myth and Reality in Oberlin History. Alumnae Magazine. 68:4-10.

Boas, Franz
1916 Tsimshian Mythology. Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology. 31:29-1037 Washington.

1935 Kwakiutle Culture as Reflected in Mythology. Memoirs of the American Folklore Society. Vol.28.

Bobker, Michael
1977 Kinship and Community Among Some Black Families in Oberlin. Unpublished Masters Thesis.

Brown, John
1840-41 Letters of John Brown (Photographic Copies).

Brunvand, Jan Harold
1976 Folklore: A Study and Research Guide. New York: St. Martin's Press.

1977 Verbal Art as Performance. Massachusetts: Newbury House Pub. Inc.

1978 The Study of American Folklore. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

Chamberlain, Ernest Barrett
1965 The Churchills of Oberlin. Oberlin, Ohio: O.H.I.O.

Chapin, William H.
1929-31 Landmarks of Early Oberlin. Vols. 26-7.

Christensen, Reider Th.
1958 The Migratory Legends. FCC no 175.

Cushing, F.H.
1931 Zuni Folktales. New York: p.411-22.

Degh, Linda and Andrew Vazsonyi
1974 The Memorate and Proto-Memorate. Journal of American Folklore. 87:225-39.

Dorson, Richard M.
1977 American Folklore. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Dundes, Alan
1962 The Binary Structure of 'Unsuccessful Repetition' in Lithuanian Folktales. Western Folklore. 21:165-174.

1962 From Etic to Emic Units in the Structural Study of Folk Tales. Journal of American Folklore. 75:95-105.

1964a The Morphology of North American Indian Folk Tales. FCC 195. Helsinki.

1964b Texture, Text and Context. Southern Folklore Quarterly. 28: 251-265.

1965a On Computers and Folk Tales. Western Folklore. 24:185-189.

1965b The Study of Folklore. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

1965c Analytic Essays in Folklore. Paris: Mouton The Hague.

Fairchild, E.H.
1868 Historical Sketch of Oberlin College. Oberlin, Ohio: Springfield Republic Printing Company.

1871 Oberlin: Its Origin, Progress and Results. Oberlin, Ohio: R. Butler Printer.

Fischer, J. L.
1963 The Sociopsychological Analysis of Folktales. Current Anthropology. 4:235-295.

Fletcher, Robert Samuel
1930 Going West to College in the Thirties. Oberlin College Library Bulletin. 2:1 pp.5-20.

1932 John Brown and Oberlin. Oberlin Alumnae Magazine 27:135-41.

1943 A History of Oberlin College From its Foundation Through the Civil War. Vols I+II. Chicago: R.R. Dunnelley and Sons.

Fullerton, Kemper
1938 Essays and Sketches Oberlin 1904-34. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Gayton, A.H.
1951 Perspectives in Folklore. Journal of American Folklore. 64:252 p.147-50.

Gilbert, Helen
1975 The Crack in the Abbey Floor: A Laboratory Analysis of a Legend. International Folklore. 8:61-78.

Goldsmith, Barbara
198? The New York Times.

Hallowell, A.I.
1947 Myth, Culture and Personality. American Anthropologist. 49:544-45.

Hand, Wayland
1965 Status of European American Legend Study. Current Anthropology. 6:439-46.

1979 American Folk Legend: A Symposium. California: University of California Press.

Hanko, Lauri
1964 Memorates and the Study of Folk Beliefs. JFI 1:5-19.

Herskovits, Melville, J.
1946 Folklore After a Hundred Years: A Problem in Redefinition. Journal of American Folklore. 59:232

p.89-100.

Hosford, Frances Juliette
1934 Oberlin No-Myths. Oberlin Alumnae Magazine. 30:171-3.

1937 Father Shipherd's Magna Charta. Boston: Marshall Jones Company.

Jacobs, Melville
1966 The Anthropologist Looks at Myth. Austin University Texas Press.

Jason, Heda
1971 Concerning the 'Historical' and the 'Local' legends and their Relatives. Journal of American Folklore. 84:134.

Jung, C.G. and C. Kerenyi
1963 Essays on the Science of Mythology. New York.

Kirshenblatt-Grimblett
1975 A Parable in Context: A Social Interactional Analysis of Storytelling Performance. Folklore and Communication. (Ben-Amos and Goldstein eds.) Paris: Mouton.

King, Henry Churchill
1911 The Oberlin Inheritance. Oberlin, Ohio: The News Printing Company.

Kongas, Maranda, Ellie Kaija and Pierre Maranda
1962 Structural Models in Folklore. Midwest Folklore. 12:133-192.

Kroeber, A.L.
1976 Yourok Myths. California: University of California Press.

Lang, A.
1887 Myth, Ritual and Religion. London. Vol. I.

Leach, Edmund
1961 Levi Strauss in the Garden of Eden: An Examination of Some Recent Developments in the Analysis of Myth. Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences. SerII 23:386-96.

1967 The Structural Study of Myth and Totemism. Association of Social Anthropologists Monographs. No.5 London and New York.

Lee, Hector
1949 The Three Nephites: The Substance and Significance of the Legend in Folklore. University of New Mexico Publications in Language and Literature No. 2. Albuquerque.

Levi Strauss, Claude
1955 The Structural Study of Myth. Journal of American Folklore. 69:428-44.

1978 Myth and Meaning. New York: Shocken Books.

Lindahl, Carl, J. Sanford Rikoon and Elain J. Lawless
1979 A Basic Guide to Fieldwork for Beginning Folklore Students: Techniques of Selection, Collection, Analysis and Presentation. Indiana: Folklore Publications Group.

Littleton, C. Scott.
1965 A Two Dimensional Scheme for the Classification of Narratives. Journal of American Folklore. 78:21-27.

Malinowski, Bronislaw
1926 Myth in Primitive Psychology. New York.

Maranda, Pierre and Elli Kongas Maranda
1971 Structural Analysis of Oral Tradition. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press.

Mullen, Patrik B.
1971 The Relationship of Legend and Folk Belief. Journal of American Folklore. 84: 406-13.

1972 Modern Legend and Rumor Theory. JFI 9: 95-109.

N.A.
1923 A History of Honor: What Oberlin has Meant and Now Means to American Life. Oberlin, Ohio.

Oberlin Oral History Archives. Oberlin Oral History Committee.

Olrik, Axel
1965 Epic Laws of Folk Narrative. The Study of Folklore. Alan Dundes (ed. comp) New Jersey: Prentice Hall. Inc.

Oring, Elliott
1986 Folk Groups and Folk Genres. Utah: Utah State University Press.

Paredes, Americo and Richard Bauman
1972 Toward New Perspectives in Folklore. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Phillips, Wilbur H.
1933 Oberlin Colony: The Story of a Century. Oberlin, Ohio: Oberlin Printing Company.

Propp, Vladimir
1968 Morphology of the Folk Tale. Texas: University of Texas Press. (Trans. Laurence Scott, Intro. Alan Dundes.)

1984 Theory and History of Folklore. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Shipherd, Jacob R.
1972 History of the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue. New York: Da Capo Press.

Shumway, A.L. and C. DeW. Brower
1883 Oberliniana: A Jubilee Volume of Semi-Historical Anecdotes Connected with the Past and Present 1833-1883 Cleveland: Home Pub. Co.

Sperber, Dan
1974 Rethinking Symbolism. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Swing, Albert Temple
1907 James Harris Fairchild or Sixty-Eight Years with a Christian College. New York: Fleming H. Revell.

Taylor, Archer
1964 The Biographical Pattern in Traditional Narrative. Journal of the Folklore Institute. 1:114-129.

Turner, Victor
1969 The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure. New York: Cornell University Press.

1982 From Ritual to Theater: The Human Seriousness of Play. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications.

Vansina, Jan
1985 Oral Tradition as History. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.

Waugh, Butler
1966 Structural Analysis in Literature and Folklore. Western Folklore. 25: 153-164.

Wildawvsky, Aaron
1964 Leadership in a Small Town. New Jersey: Tolowa.